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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Life and Work

Sister Nivedita, whose previous name was Margaret Noble, was of Irish parentage and was born at Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, on October 28, 1867. After finishing her education at the Halifax College, she worked in various girls' schools gaining practical experience of teaching. In 1892, at the age of 25, she opened a school of her own in Wimbledon and settled down to serious work. She was a close student of Pestalozzi and Froëbel and one of the enthusiastic supporters of the New Education movement, then in vogue in London.

With her manifold intellectual interests Margaret had one deep-rooted trouble, namely, the growing consciousness of uncertainty and despair with regard to religion. It was at this time that Swami Vivekananda reached London with his message of Vedanta. And his words "came as living water to men perishing of thirst" to quote Margaret's words. She met him first in November, 1895. His teachings aroused Margaret's dormant religious aspirations and desire to serve humanity unselfishly, and she finally decided to take the plunge, though Swami Vivekananda, on his part, was very frank in putting forward all possible arguments against her intention to join his mission. On July 29, 1897, he wrote to her:

"Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman; a real lioness, to work for the Indians, women specially.

"India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted.

"Yet the difficulties are many. You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion.

"Then the climate is fearfully hot; our winter in most places being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing.

"Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the cities. If in spite of all this you dare venture into the work, you are welcome, a hundred times welcome. . . ."

Margaret's earnestness helped her to make a quick decision. She left England at the end of 1897, and reached Calcutta on January 28, 1898. On March 25, she was initiated into Brahmacharya and given by her Guru the name Nivedita, the dedicated.

After a tour of the Almora and Kashmir regions from May to October with Swami Vivekananda and others, Nivedita returned to Calcutta in November. On November 13, in the presense of the Holy Mother and with her blessings, her school in Bagh Bazar was declared open. But it was only an experimental school, attended with much difficulty, and after a few months she decided to close it and go abroad to find new means and opportunities. In June, 1899, she left with Swami Vivekananda for Europe and America. Everywhere she went she employed her oratorical powers on India's behalf and strove to secure financial help for her educational experiment in India.

Nivedita returned to India in the beginning of 1902. She could not be with Swami Vivekananda for long, for he died on July 4, 1902. The end of personal association did not deter her from carrying on his work. "He is not dead; he is with us always. I cannot even grieve. I only want to work," she wrote to a friend immediately afterwards.

With the help of Christine Greenstidel, an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who joined her some months later, she expanded the scope of her school-work. From a tiny Kindergarten School it grew into a High School, with a separate section for elderly ladies also. The school-work was gradually entrusted to Christine and Nivedita took to a wider field of work—that of 'Nation-making'.

During her tour of Europe and America she had keenly felt that a country under foreign domination cannot dream of regeneration—social, political or cultural. Political freedom was the point to start with. Therefore, from 1902 to 1904 she went on extensive lecture tours to different parts of India urging people to realize the need of the hour and strive to make India free and great. According to her, the three things on which people should lay great emphasis were: first, to have infinite faith in their own reserve power ; second, to gain all-round strength to free themselves from the shackles of the foreign government ; and third, to realize that the advent of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda was to give light to those who walked in darkness. All her writings and speeches of this period reverberate with these sentiments.

By the end of 1904 the political atmosphere in the country, especially, in Calcutta, was very disturbing. The declaration of the Partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon accelerated the political activities of the different patriotic parties. Nivedita experienced the joy of seeing the growth of the new spirit and the dawn of a new India. She was the most fervent and convinced 'nationalist' ; her invaluable writings and speeches inspired young men with a burning passion to lead higher, truer, nobler and purposeful lives, and her challenge to the leaders to rise to the occasion influenced an ever-widening circle of friends as years passed by. Among her eminent contemporaries, who became very friendly with her, were statesmen. poets, artists, scientists, historians and journalists. Romesh

Chundra Dutta, G. K. Gokhale, Bipin Chandra Pal, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Abanindra Nath Tagore, Jadunath Sarkar and Ramananda Chatterjee were a few amongst them.

Nivedita's work was much handicapped by her failing health. In 1905 she fell seriously ill. Yet, in 1906, she visited the famine and flood-stricken parts of East Bengal, as a result of which she suffered from a long spell of malarial fever. These two illnesses and the heavy strain of work shattered her health. In the middle of 1907, and again for six months in 1910-11, she left for the West. She returned to India in the spring of 1911 and in the Puja holidays went for a change to Darjeeling, where she breathed her last before completing her forty-fourth year.

Nivedita's life was short, but full and busy one. She lived in the great time of the National Revival in India. India was the theme of her writings and for that she made a deep study of Indian literature, philosophy, mythology and history. Her mind was therefore amply furnished with rich facts. Combined with her comprehensive mind was a remarkable largeness of heart and deep insight of love. This helped her to interpret in an extraordinary and inexplicable manner Indian religion and thought, art and literature, custom and tradition. Her interpretations nourished the imagination and exalted the spirit of the people of this land, generally and lastingly, then, as they do now. The impact of her mind and its creation was felt even by her contemporaries who had reached eminence in their respective fields of work. That is the reason why they paid glowing tributes to her life and work. It will not be out of place to remember today what some of them said of her four-and-a-half decades ago.

Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh: "If our Sister fell under the spell of India we in our turn fell under her spell, and her bewitching personality attracted thousands of our young men to her. If the dry bones are beginning to stir it is

because Sister Nivedita breathed the breath of life into them."

Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee: "She was an Indian through and through, an Indian to the very marrow of her bones. Her nationality was but an external incident—her soul was Indian. It seemed as if the liberated spirit of some Rishi of the olden times had been reincarnated in her, so that vitalised by the life of the west, she might once again, amid familiar environments, serve the people of her ancient love."

Mr. G. K. Gokhale: "Her marvellous intellect, her lyric powers of expression, her great industry, the intensity with which she held her beliefs and convictions, and last but not the least, that truly great gift—capacity to see the soul of things straightway—all these would have made her a most remarkable woman of any time and in any country. And when to these were joined—as was in her case—a love for India, that over-flowed all bounds, a passionate devotion to her interest and an utter self-surrender in her service and finally a severe austerity of life accepted not only uncomplainingly but gladly, for her sake, is it any wonder that Sister Nivedita touched our imagination and captured our hearts, or that she exercised a profound and far-reaching influence on the thoughts and ideas of those around her, and that we acclaimed her as one of the greatest men and women that have lived and laboured for any land!"

Rabindra Nath Tagore: "I have not noticed in any other human being the wonderful power that was hers of absolute dedication of herself. . . . The life which Sister Nivedita gave for us was a very great life. There was no defrauding of us on her part, that is, she gave herself up fully for the service of India; she did not keep anything back for her own use. . . . She was in fact a Mother of People. . . . When she uttered the word "Our People,"

the tone of absolute kinship which struck the ear was not heard from any other among us. Whoever has seen what reality there was in her love of the people, has surely understood that we—while giving perhaps our time, our money, even our life—have not been able to give them our heart."

The writings and speeches of Nivedita amply prove the truth of all these sentiments.

The Centenary Edition

About sixteen books of Nivedita have so far been published, mostly by the Advaita Ashrama and the Udbodhan Office. Some of these are now out of print. Moreover, a great number of her writings, speeches, letters etc. have never been brought to light before. It was therefore the desire of the authorities of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School to bring out the complete works during her birth centenary year (1967—68), as a homage to her hallowed memory.

In her Will Sister Nivedita had left all her writings to her Girls' School,* the sale proceeds of which even now augment the Permanent Fund of the School. But, unfortunately, due to her sudden and unexpected death at Darjeeling no effort was made to collect her writings, and now they lie scattered at different places with different people in India and abroad. Our effort has been to collect as many of her writings as possible.

In this edition of her Works will be found all her original writings which we know to have been published by Nivedita herself or those posthumous publications which, we are convinced, are authentic. It may be well to point

* Nivedita's School was not known by any particular name when she ran it. In her project for the School Nivedita called it the 'Ramakrishna School for Girls'. Some western friends of hers called it the 'Vivekananda School', and the people of the locality referred to it simply as 'Nivedita's School'. After her death, when in 1918, it was affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission it was given the name the 'Ramakrishna Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School'. On August 9, 1963, it was handed over to the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission and since then has been known as the 'Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School'.

out that in the four Volumes of the present edition, no attempt has been made to follow any chronological order. A Chronological Table is, however, added in every volume to facilitate the knowledge of the publications in detail.

The four volumes are divided more or less on the basis of the subject-matter in order to keep up the continuity of thought. The published books are all included in the volumes, though in one or two cases, the matter had to be split up due to reasons like repetition in printing and the like.

Great pains have been taken to ensure accuracy in the text. In case of divergence in readings between the current editions and the First Edition, the latter have been accepted. The writer's use of Sanskrit or Bengali words show certain oddities and inconsistencies of spellings, use of capitals and italics. It seemed useless to preserve these with scrupulous exactness and therefore effort has been made to maintain uniformity throughout the four volumes.

In some cases where passages of striking beauty, or otherwise interesting, have been rejected by the previous editors from the original writings, the cancelled lines have been restored to their original positions. For example, the book entitled *Religion and Dharma* comprises the 'Occasional Notes' written for the *Prabuddha Bharata* from August, 1906, to November, 1911. The first edition published in 1915 by Longman's Green and Co., London, and subsequent Indian Editions published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, omit lines in practically every article. Thus restored, the changes are sure to catch the reader's eyes, but as the sources of the articles are given in the Chronological Table, no notice is given in the text.

In this Volume are included the following works:
Our Master and His Message.
The Master As I Saw Him.
Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda.
Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan—A Pilgrim's Diary.

Kali The Mother.

Swami Vivekananda died on July, 4, 1902. In a letter to Miss Josephine Mac Leod Nivedita wrote on July 16, 1902, "People suggest that I should write a life of Swami; but I think time must pass first.... But if you will tell me that you want it, I will begin any time." On June 23, 1904, she noted in her diary: "Swami Ramakrishnananda came—asked me to write the life of Swamiji". An incomplete manuscript in the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Library, which seems to be her first attempt to write about Swami Vivekananda, is dated Calcutta, August 6, 1904. The first few selected pages of striking personal revelations from this manuscript have been added as an Appendix to the *Master As I Saw Him* to show the aim and purpose of her undertaking, and the spirit in which she wrote. "I have given up the idea of attempting to write your life, and am content to record the story of my own vision and understanding only. How it began, how it grew, what memories I gathered; my tale will be a record of fragments, and no more. Yet I do pray that through this broken utterance some word of yours may here and there be heard—some glimpse caught of the greatness of your Heart."

The *Prabuddha Bharata,* an important organ of the Ramakrishna Mission, published the *Master As I Saw Him* serially from 1906 to 1910. In book form, the first edition saw the light of the day on February 1, 1910, which was the auspicious day of Swami Vivekananda's birthday. Swami Saradananda, the then General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in his benedictory note wrote:

Salutation to Mother!

In sending out into the world this book—the tribute of her love and gratitude to her Guru—Nivedita has the blessings and good wishes of all his brothers.

Belur Math, Saradananda.
Feb. 1, 1910.

On February 2, 1910, Nivedita wrote to her friend Mrs. Sarah Bull: "Yesterday was Swamiji's birthday, and one copy was hastily made ready for me to take to the Math, and put on his sofa."

Soon after its publication it was acclaimed as a masterpiece of biographical writing. Prof. T. K. Cheyne in his review of the book wrote in the *Hibbert Journal* (January, 1911): "It may be placed among the choicest religious classics, below the various Scriptures, but on the same shelf with the *Confessions of Saint Augustine* and Sabatier's *Life of Saint Francis.*"

Since then it has gone into nine editions, all published by the Udbodhan Office.

The Notes Of Some Wanderings With The Swami Vivekananda is intensely interesting as it reveals Nivedita's innerself more clearly than any other book. It was first published as pages from a diary in *The Brahmavadin* from 1906 to 1910. In book-form, however, it was published, in 1913, by the Udbodhan Office. The first editor re-edited the entire matter, dividing it into chapters, giving adequate headings and adding a short synopsis of the contents of each chapter. A concluding note was added by him to complete the record of their travel. In the present edition, except the detailed contents, all other changes have been accepted. A complete manuscript of the book is preserved in the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, from which some portions have been added as Appendix to the text.

In the last chapter there was some confusion about the dates mentioned in the texts printed so far. The period mentioned is August 14th to September 20th. The mention of September seems to be a mistake, it must be August. For otherwise the dates do not tally with the days mentioned in the text. On verification with the manuscript it was found that the mistake is originally made in the manuscript. In the present edition, however, it has been rectified.

Nivedita went to Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan in

the summer of 1910. She published her notes of this pilgrimage serially in the *Modern Review* of the same year under the title *The Northern Tirtha*: *A Pilgrim's Diary*. It was published in book-form in the year 1911 by the Udbodhan Office under the same title. The reprint of the same book was brought out in 1921, but the title was changed from a too general one to *Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan*: *A Pilgrim's Diary*, to indicate the particular nature of its contents. In the same edition was added another article on Kedarnath and Badri Narayan which was first published in the *Prabuddha Bharata*, September, 1921. The book was reprinted in 1928, and is long since out of print.

Kali the Mother was the first book of Nivedita, published in 1900, by Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd., London, in pocket size. The first Indian Edition was published by the Advaita Ashram in 1950, and reprinted in 1953.

Nivedita's love and devotion for Kali, the Mother of the Universe, was a legacy from her Guru, Swami Vivekananda. From him she acquired that understanding of the Terrible and the Beneficent Aspects of Kali, such as had never been vouchsafed to any foreigner before. The whole book is a psalm to the Universal Mother, as it were.

In conclusion, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have helped us in bringing out the present edition.

Our best thanks are due to the Belur Math, the Advaita Ashrama, the Udbodhan Office, the National Library and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad for permission granted in the readiest and most cordial fashion to make use of certain manuscripts, newspapers, periodicals, blocks etc. in their possession.

PRAVRAJIKA ATMAPRANA

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

of the

WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF SISTER NIVEDITA INCLUDED IN THIS VOLUME

Date

1898 Christmas; *The Story Of Kali* written at Bally (Bengal) for Baby Legget.
Voice Of The Mother written; both included in the book *Kali The Mother.*

1899 May 24; *A Visit To Dakshineskwar* written;
June 4; *An Intercession* written; both included in the book *Kali The Mother.*

1900 First publication of *Kali The Mother* by Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd., London.

1902 July 27; *The National Significance Of The Swami Vivekananda's Life And Work* written for the *Hindu,* Madras.
September 26; Lecture on *Swami Vivekananda* delivered at the Gaiety Theatre, Bombay, as reported in the *Mahratha* of October 5.
Swami Vivekananda As A Patriot published in the *New India* of October 2, as reported in *The Brahmacharin.* Both these two are reproduced from the book—*Vivekananda In Indian Newspapers* to be published soon by Sankari Prasad Basu and Sunil Behari Ghosh.

1904 January 24; Lecture on *Swami Vivekananda's Mission* delivered in Patna, reproduced from the *Behar Herald* of January 30.

1905 February 5; Lecture on *Swami Vivekananda's Mission To The West* delivered at the Belur Math; reproduced from *The Brahmavadin* of 1905.

1906 April; beginning of the publication of *The Master As I Saw Him* serially in the *Prabuddha Bharata;* beginning

Date

of the publication of *Notes Of Some Wanderings With The Swami Vivekananda* serially in the *Brahmavadin.*

1907 June 24; *Our Master And His Message,* an introduction to The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, written.

1910 February 1; first edition of *The Master As I Saw Him* published by the Udbodhan Office.
The Northern Tirtha: A Pilgrim's Diary first published serially in *The Modern Review.*

1911 January; *The Historical Significance Of the Northern Tirtha* first published in *The Modern Review.*
First edition of *The Northern Tirth: A Pilgrim's Diary* published by the Udbodhan Office.

1913 First Edition of *The Notes Of Some Wanderings With The Swami Vivekananda,* published by the Udbodhan Office.

1918 Second Edition of *The Master As I Saw Him* published by the Udbodhan Office.

1921 September and October; *Kedar Nath And Badrinarayan* an article published in the *Prabuddha Bharata.*
Second Edition of *The Northern Tirtha: A Pilgrim's Diary* by the Udbodhan Office—title changed to *Kedar Nath And Badri Narayan: A Pilgrim's Diary.*

1922 Second Edition of *Notes Of Some Wanderings With The Swami Vivekananda,* by the Udbodhan Office.

1923 Third Edition of *The Master As I Saw Him,* by the Udbodhan Office.

1928 Second Edition of *Kedar Nath And Badri Narayan: A Pilgrim's Diary* by the Udbodhan Office.

1930 Fourth Edition of *The Master As I Saw Him* by the Udbodhan Office.

1939 Fifth Edition of *The Master As I Saw Him* by the Udbodhan Office.

1948 Sixth Edition of *The Master As I Saw Him* by the Udbodhan Office.
Third Edition of the *Notes Of Some Wanderings With The Swami Vivekananda* by the Udbodhan Office.

1950 First Indian Edition of *Kali The Mother* by the Advaita Ashrama.

Date	
1953	Seventh Edition of *The Master As I Saw Him* by the Udbodhan Office.
	Second Edition of *Kali The Mother* by the Advaita Ashrama.

SISTER NIVEDITA

OUR MASTER AND HIS MESSAGE

OUR MASTER AND HIS MESSAGE

IN the four volumes of the works of the Swami Vivekananda which are to compose the present edition, we have what is not only a gospel to the world at large, but also, to its own children, the Charter of the Hindu Faith. What Hinduism needed, amidst the general disintegration of the modern era, was a rock where she could lie at anchor, an authoritative utterance in which she might recognise her self. And this was given to her, in these words and writings of the Swami Vivekananda.

For the first time in history, as has been said elsewhere, Hinduism itself forms here the subject of generalisation of a Hindu mind of the highest order. For ages to come, the Hindu man who would verify, the Hindu mother who would teach her children, what was the faith of their ancestors, will turn to the pages of these books for assurance and light. Long after the English language has

Introduction to the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda written on July 4, 1907.

disappeared from India, the gift that has here been made, through that language, to the world, will remain and bear its fruit in East and West alike. What Hinduism had needed, was the organising and consolidating of its own idea. What the world had needed was a faith that had no fear of truth. Both these are found here. Nor could any greater proof have been given of the eternal vigour of the Sanatan Dharma, of the fact that India is as great in the present as ever in the past, than this rise of the individual who, at the critical moment, gathers up and voices the communal consciousness.

That India should have found her own need satisfied only in carrying to the humanity outside her borders the bread of life is what might have been foreseen. Nor did it happen on this occasion for the first time. It was once before in sending out to the sister lands the message of a nation-making faith that India learnt as a whole to understand the greatness of her own thought—a self-unification that gave birth to modern Hinduism itself. Never may we allow it to be forgotten that on Indian soil first was heard the command from a Teacher to His disciples, "Go ye out into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature!" It is the same thought, the same impulse of love, taking to itself a new shape, that is uttered by the lips of the Swami Vivekananda, when to a great gathering in the West he says: "If one religion be true, then all the others also must be true. Thus the Hindu faith is yours as much as mine." And again, in amplification of the same idea: "We Hindus do not merely tolerate, we unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedan, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrian, and kneeling to the cross of the Christian We know that all religions alike, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, are but so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite. So we gather all these flowers, and, binding them together with the cord of love, make them into a wonderful bouquet of worship."

To the heart of this speaker, none was foreigner or alien. For him, there existed only Humanity and Truth.

Of the Swami's address before the Parliament of Religions, it may be said that when he began to speak it was of "the religious ideas of the Hindus," but when he ended, Hinduism had been created. The moment was ripe with this potentiality. The vast audience that faced him represented exclusively the occidental mind, but included some development of all that in this was most distinctive. Every nation in Europe has poured in its human contribution upon America, and notably upon Chicago, where the Parliament was held. Much of the best, as well as some of the worst, of modern effort and struggle, is at all times to be met with, within the frontiers of that Western Civic Queen, whose feet are upon the shores of Lake Michigan, as she sits and broods, with the light of the North in her eyes. There is very little in the modern consciousness, very little inherited from the past of Europe, that does not hold some outpost in the city of Chicago. And while the teeming life and eager interests of that centre may seem to some of us for the present largely a chaos, yet they are undoubtedly making for the revealing of some noble and slow-wrought ideal of human unity, when the days of their ripening shall be fully accomplished.

Such was the psychological area, such the sea of mind, young, tumultuous, overflowing with its own energy and self-assurance, yet inquisitive and alert withal, which confronted Vivekananda when he rose to speak. Behind him, on the contrary, lay an ocean, calm with long ages of spiritual development. Behind him lay a world that dated itself from the Vedas, and remembered itself in the Upanishads, a world to which Buddhism was almost modern ; a world that was filled with religious systems of faiths and creeds ; a quiet land, steeped in the sunlight of the tropics, the dust of whose roads had been trodden by the feet of the saints for ages upon ages. Behind him, in short, lay India, with her thousands of years of national development,

in which she had sounded many things, proved many things, and realised almost all, save only her own perfect unanimity, from end to end of her great expanse of time and space, as to certain fundamental and essential truths, held by all her people in common.

These, then, were the two mind-floods, two immense rivers of thought as it were, Eastern and modern, of which the yellow-clad wanderer on the platform of the Parliament of Religions formed for a moment the point of confluence. The formulation of the Common Bases of Hinduism was the inevitable result of the shock of their contact, in a personality, so impersonal. For it was no experience of his own that rose to the lips of the Swami Vivekananda there. He did not even take advantage of the occasion to tell the story of his Master. Instead of either of these, it was the religious consciousness of India that spoke through him, the message of his whole people, as determined by their whole past. And as he spoke, in the youth and noonday of the West, a nation, sleeping in the shadows of the darkened half of earth, on the far side of the Pacific, waited in spirit for the words that would be borne on the dawn that was travelling towards them, to reveal to them the secret of their own greatness and strength.

Others stood beside the Swami Vivekananda, on the same platform as he, as apostles of particular creeds and churches. But it was his glory that he came to preach a religion to which each of these was, in his own words, "Only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances to the same goal." He stood there, as he declared, to tell of One who had said of them all, not that one or another was true, in this or that respect, or for this or that reason, but that "All these are threaded upon Me, as pearls upon a string. Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power, raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there." To the Hindu, says Vivekananda, "Man is not travelling from error to truth, but climbing

up from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher." This, and the teaching of Mukti—the doctrine that "Man is to become divine by realising the divine," that religion is perfected in us only when it has led us to "Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, that One who is the only soul, of which all souls are but delusive manifestations"—may be taken as the two great outstanding truths which, authenticated by the longest and most complex experience in human history, India proclaimed through him to the modern world of the West.

For India herself, the short address forms, as has been said, a brief Charter of Enfranchisement. Hinduism in its wholeness the speaker bases on the Vedas, but he spiritualises our conception of the word, even while he utters it. To him, all that is true is Veda. "By the Vedas," he says, "no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times." Incidentally, he discloses his conception of the Sanatan Dharma. "From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists, and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion." To his mind, there could be no sect, no school, no sincere religious experience of the Indian people—however like an aberration it might seem to the individual—that might rightly be excluded from the embrace of Hinduism. And of this Indian Mother-Church, according to him, the distinctive doctrine is that of the Ishta Devata, the right of each soul to choose its own path, and to seek God in its own way. No army, then, carries the banner of so wide an Empire as that of Hinduism, thus defined. For as her spiritual goal is the finding of God, even so is her spiritual rule the perfect freedom of every soul to be itself.

Yet would not this inclusion of all, this freedom of

each, be the glory of Hinduism that it is, were it not for her supreme call, of sweetest promise: "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! Even ye that dwell in higher spheres! For I have found that Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. And knowing Him, ye also shall be saved from death." Here is the word for the sake of which all the rest exists and has existed. Here is the crowning realisation, into which all others are resolvable. When, in his lecture on "The Work before Us," the Swami adjures all to aid him in the building of a temple wherein every worshipper in the land can worship, a temple whose shrine shall contain only the word Om, there are some of us who catch in the utterance the glimpse of a still greater temple—India herself, the Motherland, as she already exists—and see the paths, not of the Indian churches alone, but of all Humanity, converging there, at the foot of that sacred place wherein is set the symbol that is no symbol, the name that is beyond all sound. It is to this, and not away from it, that all the paths of all the worships, and all the religious systems lead. India is at one with the most puritan faiths of the world in her declaration that progress is from seen to unseen, from the many to the One, from the low to the high, from the form to the formless, and never in the reverse direction. She differs only in having a world of sympathy and promise for every sincere conviction, wherever and whatever it may be, as constituting a step in the great ascent.

The Swami Vivekananda would have been less than he was, had anything in this Evangel of Hinduism been his own. Like the Krishna of the Gita, like Buddha, like Shankaracharya, like every great teacher that Indian thought has known, his sentences are laden with quotations from the Vedas and Upanishads. He stands merely as the Revealer, the Interpreter to India of the treasures that she herself possesses in herself. The truths he preaches would have been as true, had he never been born. Nay more, they would have been equally authentic. The difference

would have lain in their difficulty of access, in their want of modern clearness and incisiveness of statement, and in their loss of mutual coherence and unity. Had he not lived, texts that today will carry the bread of life to thousands might have remained the obscure disputes of scholars. He taught with authority, and not as one of the Pundits. For he himself had plunged to the depths of the realisation which he preached, and he came back, like Ramanuja, only to tell its secrets to the pariah, the outcast and the foreigner.

And yet this statement that his teaching holds nothing new, is not absolutely true. It must never be forgotten that it was the Swami Vivekananda who, while proclaiming the sovereignty of the Adwaita Philosophy, as including that experience in which all is one, without a second, also added to Hinduism the doctrine that Dwaita, Vishishtadwaita, and Adwaita are but three phases or stages in a single development, of which the last-named constitutes the goal. This is part and parcel of the still greater and more simple doctrine that the many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by the mind at different times and in different attitudes ; or as Sri Ramakrishna expressed the same thing: "God is both with form and without form. And He is that which includes both form and formlessness."

It is this which adds its crowning significance to our Master's life, for here he becomes the meeting-point, not only of East and West, but also of past and future. If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work, all modes of struggle, all modes of creation, which are paths of realisation. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular. To labour is to pray. To conquer is to renounce. Life is itself religion. To have and to hold is as stern a trust as to quit and to avoid.

This is the realisation which makes Vivekananda the great preacher of Karma, not as divorced from, but as expressing Jnanam and Bhakti. To him, the workshop, the

study, the farmyard and the field, are as true and fit scenes for the meeting of God with man as the cell of the monk or the door of the temple. To him, there is no difference between service of man and worship of God, between manliness and faith, between true righteousness and spirituality. All his words, from one point of view, read as a commentary upon this central conviction. "Art, Science, Religion," he said once, "are but three different ways of expressing a single truth. But in order to understand this we must have the theory of Adwaita."

The formative influence that went to the determining of his vision may perhaps be regarded as threefold. There was, first, his literary education, in Sanskrit and English. The contrast between the two worlds thus opened to him carried with it a strong impression of that particular experience which formed the theme of the Indian sacred books. It was evident that this, if true at all, had not been stumbled upon by Indian sages, as by some others, in a kind of accident. Rather was it the subject-matter of a science, the object of a logical analysis that shrank from no sacrifice which the pursuit of truth demanded.

In his Master, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, living and teaching in the temple-garden at Dakshineshwar, the Swami Vivekananda—"Noren" as he then was—found that verification of the ancient texts which his heart and his reason had demanded. Here was the reality which the books only brokenly described. Here was one to whom Samadhi was a constant mode of knowledge. Every hour saw the swing of the mind from the many to the One. Every moment heard the utterance of wisdom gathered superconsciously. Every one about him caught the vision of the divine. Upon the disciple came the desire for supreme knowledge "as if it had been a fever." Yet he who was thus the living embodiment of the books was so unconsciously, for he had read none of them! In his Guru, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda found the key to life.

Even now, however, the preparation for his own task

was not complete. He had yet to wander throughout the length and breadth of India, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, mixing with saints and scholars and simple souls alike, learning from all, teaching to all, and living with all, seeing India as she was and is, and so grasping in its comprehensiveness that vast whole, of which his Master's life and personality had been a brief and intense epitome.

These, then—the Shastras, the Guru, and the Motherland—are the three notes that mingle themselves to form the music of the works of Vivekananda. These are the treasure which it is his to offer. These furnish him with the ingredients whereof he compounds the world's heal-all of his spiritual bounty. These are the three lights burning within that single lamp which India by his hand lighted and set up, for the guidance of her own children and of the world in the few years of work between September 19, 1893, and July 4, 1902. And some of us there are, who, for the sake of that lighting, and of this record that he has left behind him, bless the land that bore him, and the hands of those who sent him forth, and believe that not even yet has it been given to us to understand the vastness and significance of the message that he spoke.

THE MASTER AS I SAW HIM

THE MASTER AS I SAW HIM

A WORD TO WESTERN READERS

FROM the close of the era of the Buddhist Missions, until the day when, as a yellow-clad Sannyasin, the Swami Vivekananda stood on the platform of the Parliament of Religions in the Chicago Exhibition of 1893, Hinduism had not thought of herself as a missionary faith. Her professional teachers, the Brahmins, being citizens and householders, formed a part of Hindu society itself and as such were held to be debarred from crossing the seas. And her wandering Sadhus—who are, in the highest cases, as much above the born Brahmin in authority, as saint or incarnation may be above priest or scholar,—had simply not thought of putting their freedom to such use. Nor did the Swami Vivekananda appear at the doors of Chicago with any credentials. He had been sent across the Pacific Ocean, as he might have wandered from one Indian village to another, by the eagerness and faith of a few disciples in Madras. And with American hospitality and frankness he was welcomed, and accorded an opportunity of speaking. In his case, as in that of the Buddhist missionaries, the

impelling force that drove him out to foreign lands was the great personality of One at whose feet he had sat, and whose life he had shared, for many years. Yet, in the West, he spoke of no personal teacher, he gave the message of no limited sect. "The religious ideas of the Hindus" were his theme at Chicago ; and similarly, thereafter, it was those elements which were common to, and characteristic of, orthodox Hinduism in all its parts, that formed the burden of his teaching. Thus for the first time in history, Hinduism itself formed the subject of the generalisation of a Hindu mind of the highest order.

The Swami remained in America until August of the year 1895, when he came to Europe for the first time. In September, he found his way to England, and a month or so later, he began teaching in London.

I

IN LONDON

It is strange to remember, and yet it was surely my good fortune, that though I heard the teachings of my Master, the Swami Vivekananda, on both the occasions of his visits to England, in 1895 and 1896, I yet knew little or nothing of him in private life, until I came to India in the early days of 1898. For as the fruit of this want of experience I have it, that at each step of his self-revelation as a personality, my Master stands out in my memory against his proper background of Indian forest, city and highway—an Eastern teacher in an Eastern world. Even in faraway London indeed, the first time I saw him, the occasion must have stirred in his mind, as it does in mine, recalling it now a host of associations connected with his own sunsteeped land. The time was a cold Sunday afternoon in November and the place, it is true, a West-end drawing room. But he was seated, facing a half-circle of listeners, with the fire on the hearth behind him, and as he answered question after question, breaking now and then into the chanting of some Sanskrit text in illustration of his reply, the scene must have appeared to him, while twilight passed into darkness, only as a curious variant upon the Indian garden, or on the group of hearers gathered at sundown round the Sadhu who sits beside the well, or under the tree outside the village-bounds. Never again in England did I see the Swami, as a teacher, in such simple fashion. Later, he was always lecturing, or the questions he answered were put with formality by members of larger audiences. Only this first time we were but fifteen or sixteen guests, intimate friends, many of us, and he sat amongst us, in his crimson robe and girdle, as one bringing us news from a far land, with a curious habit of saying now

and again "Shiva! Shiva!" and wearing that look of mingled gentleness and loftiness, that one sees on the faces of those who live much in meditation, that look, perhaps, that Raphael has painted for us, on the brow of the Sistine Child.

That afternoon is now ten years ago, and fragments only of the talk come back to me. But never-to-be-forgotten are the Sanskrit verses that he chanted for us, in those wonderful Eastern tones, at once so reminiscent of, and yet so different from, the Gregorian music of our own churches.

He was quite willing to answer a personal question, and readily explained, in reply to some enquiry, that he was in the West, because he believed that the time had come when nations were to exchange their ideals, as they were already exchanging the commodities of the market. From this point onwards, the talk was easy. He was elucidating the idea of the Eastern Pantheism, picturing the various sense-impressions as but so many different modes of the manifestation of One, and he quoted from the Gita and then translated into English: "All these are threaded upon Me, as pearls upon a string."

He told us that love was recognised in Hinduism as in Christianity, as the highest religious emotion.

And he told us,—a thing that struck me very much, leading me during the following winter to quite new lines of observation,—that both the mind and the body were regarded by Hindus as moved and dominated by a third, called the Self.

He was describing the difference between Buddhism and Hinduism, and I remember the quiet words, "the Buddhists accepted the report of the senses."

In this respect then, Buddhism must have been in strong contrast with modern agnosticism, whose fundamental suspicion as to the subjective illusion of the senses,—and therefore of all inference—would surely bring it more into line with Hinduism.

I remember that he objected to the word "faith," insisting on "realisation" instead; and speaking of sects, he

quoted an Indian proverb: "It is well to be born in a church, but it is terrible to die there."

I think that the doctrine of Re-incarnation was probably touched upon in this talk. I imagine that he spoke of Karma, Bhakti, Jnana, as the three paths of the soul. I know he dwelt for a while on the infinite power of man. And he declared the one message of all religions to lie in the call to Renunciation.

There was a word to the effect that priests and temples were not associated in India with the highest kind of religion ; and the statement that the desire to reach Heaven was in that country regarded, *by the most religious people,* "as a little vulgar."

He must have made some statement of the ideal of the freedom of the soul, which brought it into apparent conflict with our Western conception of the service of humanity, as the goal of the individual. For I remember very clearly that I heard him use the word "society" for the first time that afternoon, in the sense that I have never been quite sure of having fully understood. He had, as I suppose, stated the ideal, and he hastened to anticipate our opposition. "You will say," he said, "that this does not benefit society. But before this objection can be admitted you will first have to prove that the maintenance of society is an object in itself."

At the time, I understood him to mean 'humanity' by 'society', and to be preaching the ultimate futility of the world, and therefore of the work done to aid it. Was this his meaning? In that case, how is one to reconcile it with the fact that the service of humanity was always his whole hope? Or was he merely stating an idea, and standing aside to give it its full value? Or was his word 'society', again only a faulty translation of the curious Eastern word Samaj, coloured, as that is, with theocratic associations, and meaning something which includes amongst other things, our idea of the church?

He touched on the question of his own position, as a

wandering teacher, and expressed the Indian diffidence with regard to religious organisation, or, as some one expresses it, "with regard to a faith that ends in a church." "We believe," he said, "that organisation always breeds new evils."

He prophesied that certain religious developments then much in vogue in the West would speedily die, owing to love of money. And he declared that "Man proceeds from truth to truth, and not from error to truth."

This was indeed the master-thought which he continually approached from different points of view, the equal truth of all religions, and the impossibility for us, of criticising any of the Divine Incarnations, since all were equally forth-shinings of the One. And here he quoted that greatest of all verses of the Gita: "Whenever religion decays and irreligion prevails, *then I manifest Myself.* For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil, for the firm establishment of the truth, I AM BORN AGAIN AND AGAIN."

We were not very orthodox, or open to belief, we who had come to meet the Hindu Yogi, as he was called in London at that time. The white-haired lady, with the historic name, who sat on the Swami's left, and took the lead in questioning him, with such exquisiteness of courtesy, was perhaps the least unconventional of the group in matters of belief, and she had been a friend and disciple of Frederick Denison Maurice. Our hostess and one or two others were interested in those modern movements which have made of an extended psychology the centre of a faith. But most of us had, I incline to think, been singled out for the afternoon's hospitality, on the very score of our unwillingness to believe, for the difficulty of convincing us of the credibility of religious propaganda in general.

Only this habit, born of the constant need of protecting the judgment against ill-considered enthusiasm, can, as I now think, furnish any excuse for the coldness and pride with which we all gave our private verdicts on the speaker at the end of our visit. "It was not new," was our accusa-

tion, as one by one we spoke with our host and hostess before leaving. All these things had been said before.

For my own part, however, as I went about the tasks of that week, it dawned on me slowly that it was not only ungenerous, it was also unjust, to dismiss in such fashion the message of a new mind and a strange culture. It occurred to me that though each separate *dictum* might find its echo or its fellow amongst things already heard or already thought, yet it had never before fallen to my lot to meet with a thinker who in one short hour had been able to express all that I had hitherto regarded as highest and best. I therefore took the only two opportunities that remained to me, of hearing the Swami lecture, while he was still in London.

The feeling that great music wakes in us, grows and deepens with its repetition. And, similarly, as I read over the notes of those two lectures now, they seem to me much more wonderful than they did then. For there was a quality of blindness in the attitude I presented to my Master, that I can never sufficiently regret. When he said, "The universe is like a cobweb and minds are the spiders; for mind is one as well as many," he was simply talking beyond my comprehension. I noted what he said, was interested in it, but could pass no judgment upon it, much less accept it. And this statement describes more or less accurately the whole of my relation to his system of teaching, even in the following year, when I had listened to a season's lectures; even, perhaps, on the day when I landed in India.

There were many points in the Swami's teachings of which one could see the truth at once. The doctrine that while no religion was true in the way commonly claimed, yet all were equally true in a very real way, was one that commanded the immediate assent of some of us. When he said that God, really Impersonal, seen through the mists of sense became Personal, one was awed and touched by the beauty of thought. When he said that the spirit

behind an act was more powerful than the act itself, or when he commended vegetarianism, it was possible to experiment. But his system as a whole, I for one, viewed with suspicion, as forming only another of those theologies which if a man should begin by accepting, he would surely end by transcending and rejecting. And one shrinks from the pain and humiliation of spirit that such experiences involve.

It is difficult at this point to be sufficiently explicit. The time came, before the Swami left England, when I addressed him as "Master". I had recognised the heroic fibre of the man, and desired to make myself the servant of his love for his own people. But it was his *character* to which I had thus done obeisance. As a religious teacher, I saw that although he had a system of thought to offer, nothing in that system would claim him for a moment, if he found that truth led elsewhere. And to the extent that this recognition implies, I became his disciple. For the rest, I studied his teaching sufficiently to become convinced of its coherence, but never, till I had had experiences that authenticated them, did I inwardly cast in my lot with the final justification of the things he came to say. Nor did I at that time, though deeply attracted by his personality, dream of the immense distance which I was afterwards to see, as between his development and that of any other thinker or man of genius whom I could name.

Referring to this scepticism of mine, which was well known at the time to the rest of the class, a more fortunate disciple, long afterwards, was teasing me, in the Swami's presence, and claiming that she had been able to accept every statement she had ever heard him make. The Swami paid little or no attention to the conversation at the time, but afterwards he took a quiet moment to say "Let none regret that they were difficult to convince! I fought my Master for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way! Every inch of the way!"

THE PERSONIFICATION OF GOD

One or two impressions, however, stand out from those first discourses. Christianity had once meant to me the realisation of God as the Father. But I had long mourned over my own loss of faith in this symbolism, and had desired to study its value as an idea, apart from its objective truth or untruth. For I suspected that such a conception would have its own effect on the character and perhaps on the civilisation of those who held it. This question, however, I had been unable to follow up, for want of material of comparison. And here was one who told us of no less than five systems of worship, founded on similar personifications of the divine idea! He preached a religion which began with the classification of religious ideas!

I was very much struck, further, by the strangeness, as well as the dignity, of some of the Indian conceptions which I now heard of for the first time. The very newness of those metaphors, and of the turn of thought, made them an acquisition. There was the tale, for instance, of the saint who ran after a thief, with the vessels he had dropped in his terror at being discovered, and cast them all at his feet, crying, "O Lord, I knew not that Thou wast there! Take them, they are Thine! Pardon me Thy child!" And again, of the same saint, we heard how he described the bite of a cobra, when at nighfall he recovered, by saying, "A messenger came to me from the Beloved." There was the inference, again, that the Swami himself had drawn from the mirage in the desert. Fifteen days he had seen it, and taken it always to be water. But now that he had been thirsty and found it to be unreal, he might see it again for fifteen days, but always henceforth he would know it to be false. The experience to which such achievements had been possible, the philosophy that could draw some parallel between this journey in the desert and life, were such as it seemed an education to understand.

INDIAN RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS

But there was a third element in the Swami's teaching whose unexpectedness occasioned me some surprise. It was easy to see that he was no mere lecturer, like some other propounders of advanced ideas whom I had heard even from the pulpit. It was by no means his intention to set forth dainty dishes of poetry and intellectuality for the enjoyment of the rich and idle classes. He was, to his own thinking at least, as clearly an apostle, making an appeal to men, as any poor evangelical preacher, or Salvation Army officer, calling on the world to enter into the kingdom of God. And yet he took his stand on what was noblest and best in us. I was not thinking of his announcement that sin was only an evil dream. I knew that such a theory might merely be part of a cumbrous system of theology, and no more a reality to its elucidator than the doctrine that when a man steals our coat we should give to him our cloak also, was to ourselves. The thing that I found astonishing was a certain illustration urged by him. His audience was composed for the most part of fashionable young mothers, and he spoke of their terror and their flight, if a tiger should suddenly appear before them in the street. "But suppose," he said with a sudden change of tone, "suppose there were a baby in the path of the tiger! Where would your place be then? At his mouth—any one of you—I am sure of it."

These, then, were the things I remembered and pondered over, concerning the Swami, when he had left England that winter, for America,—first, the breadth of his religious culture; second, the great intellectual newness and interest of the thought he had brought to us; and thirdly, the fact that his call was sounded in the name of that which was strongest and finest, and was not in any way dependent on the meaner elements in man.

II

THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN LONDON—1896

The Swami returned to London, in April of the year following, and taught continuously at the house where he was living with his good friend, Mr. E. T. Sturdy, in S. George's Road, and again, after the summer holidays in a large class-room near Victoria Street. During July, August and September, he travelled in France, Germany and Switzerland, with his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier and Miss H. F. Muller. In December, he left for India, with some of his disciples, by way of Rome, and arrived at Colombo, in Ceylon, on January the 15th, 1897.

Many of the lectures which he gave during the year 1896, have since been published, and in them, all the world may read his message, and the interpretation by which he sought to make it clear. He had come to us as a missionary of the Hindu belief in the Immanent God, and he called upon us to realise the truth of his gospel for ourselves. Neither then, nor at any aftertime, did I ever hear him advocate to his audience any specialized form of religion. He would refer freely enough to the Indian sects,—or as I would like to call them, 'churches,'—by way of illustration of what he had to say. But he never preached anything but that philosophy which, to Indian thinking, underlies all creeds. He never quoted anything but the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. And he never, in public, mentioned his own Master, nor spoke in specific terms of any part of Hindu mythology.

He was deeply convinced of the need for Indian thought, in order to enable the religious consciousness of the West to welcome and assimilate the discoveries of modern science, and to enable it also to survive that destruc-

tion of local mythologies which is an inevitable result of all world-consolidations. He felt that what was wanted was a formulation of faith which could hold its adherents fearless of truth. "The salvation of Europe depends on a rationalistic religion," he exclaims, in the course of one of his lectures; and again, many times repeated, "The materialist is right! There is but One. Only he calls that One Matter and I call it God!" In another, and longer passage, he describes the growth of the religious idea, and the relation of its various forms to one another. "At first," he says, "the goal is far off, outside Nature and far beyond it, attracting us all towards it. This has to be brought near, yet without being degraded or degenerated, until, when it has come closer and closer, the God of Heaven becomes the God in Nature, till the God in Nature becomes the God who is Nature, and the God who is Nature becomes the God within this temple of the body, and the God dwelling in the temple of the body becomes the temple itself, becomes the soul of man. Thus it reaches the last words it can teach. He whom the sages have sought in all these places, is in our own hearts. Thou art He, O man! Thou art He!"

LECTURES ON MAYA

He always considered, for his own part, that his greatest intellectual achievement during this period had consisted in his lectures on Maya and it is only by reading these carefully that an idea can be formed of the difficulty of the task he undertook, in trying to render the conception in modern English. Throughout the chapters in question we feel that we are in presence of a *struggle* to express an idea which is clearly apprehended, in a language which is not a fit vehicle for it. The word is wrongly understood, says the Swami, to mean 'delusion'. Originallly it meant something like 'magic,' as "Indra through his Maya assumed various forms." But this meaning was subsequently dropped, and the word went through many trans-

formations. A milestone in the series of conceptions that finally determined its meaning is found in the text, "Because we talk in vain, and because we are satisfied with the things of the senses, and because we are running after desires, therefore we, as it were, *cover this reality with a mist.*" Finally the word is seen to have assumed its ultimate meaning in the quotation from the Shvetashvatara Upanishad. "Know nature to be Maya. And the mind, the ruler of this Maya, as the Lord Himself." "The Maya of the Vedanta," says the speaker, "in its latest development, is a simple statement of facts—what we are and what we see around us."

RENUNCIATION OR CONQUEST

But that these words are not intended as a definition will be seen by anyone who reads the whole of the lectures on Maya for himself. It is there evident that the word does not simply refer to the Universe as known through the senses, but also describes the tortuous, erroneous and self-contradictory character of that knowledge. "This is a statement of fact, not a theory," says the Swami, "that this world is a Tantalus' hell, that we do not know anything about this Universe; yet at the same time we cannot say that we do not know. To walk in the midst of a dream, half-sleeping, half-waking, passing all our lives in a haze, this is the fate of every one of us. This is the fate of all sense knowledge. This is the Universe." We see here, as in many other of his interpretations, that an Indian word is incapable of exact rendering into English, and that the only way of arriving at an understanding of it is to try to catch the conception which the speaker is striving to express, rather than to fasten the attention on a sentence or two here or there. By Maya is thus meant that shimmering, elusive, half-real, half-unreal complexity, in which there is no rest, no satisfaction, no ultimate certainty, of which we become aware through the senses, and through the mind as dependent on the senses. At the same time—"And *That*

by which all this is pervaded, know *That* to be the Lord Himself!" In these two conceptions, placed side by side, we have the whole theology of Hinduism, as presented by the Swami Vivekananda in the West. All other teachings and ideas are subordinated to these two. Religion was a matter of the growth of the individual, "a question always of being and becoming." But such growth must presuppose the two fundamental facts, and the gradual transference of the centre of gravity, as it were, out of the one into the other,—out of Maya into the Self. The condition of absorption in Maya was "bondage" in the Eastern sense. To have broken that bondage was "freedom" or Mukti. or even Nirvana. The path for the would-be breaker of bondage must always be by seeking for renunciation, not by seeking for enjoyment. In this matter, the Swami was, as he said himself, only echoing what had been the burden of all religions. For all religions, Indian and other, have called a halt in the quest for pleasure. All have sought to turn life into a battle-field rather than a ball-room. All have striven to make man strong for death rather than for life. Where I think that the Swami perhaps differed somewhat from other teachers was in his acceptance of every kind of mastery as a form of renunciation. Towards the end of his life I told him that 'renunciation' was the only word I had ever heard from his lips. And yet in truth I think that 'conquer!' was much more characteristic of him. For he pointed out that it was by renunciation, that is to say, by sustained and determined effort, by absorption in hard problems through lonely hours, by choosing toil and refusing ease, that Stephenson, for instance, invented the steam-engine. He pointed out that the science of medicine represented as strong a concentration of man's mind upon healing as would be required for a cure by prayer or by thought. He made us feel that all study was an austerity directed to a given end of knowledge. And above all, he preached that character, and character alone, was the power that determined the permanence of a religious

wave. Resistance was to his mind the duty of the citizen, non-resistance of the monk. And this, because, for all, the supreme achievement was strength. "Forgive," he said, "when you also can bring legions of angels to an easy victory." While victory was still doubtful, however, only a coward, to his thinking, would turn the other cheek.

THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

One reads the same lesson in his Master's story of the boy who for twenty years worked to acquire the power to walk on water. "And so," said a saint, "you have given twenty years of effort to doing that for which others give the ferryman a penny!" The lad might have answered that no ferryman could give his passengers what he had acquired by twenty years of patient striving. But the fact remains that to these teachers, supremely sane, the world's art of navigation had its own full value and its proper place. Years afterwards, in Paris, some one approached him with a question as to the general history of the development of Indian ideas on these subjects. "Did Buddha teach that the many was real and the ego unreal, while Orthodox Hinduism regards the One as the Real, and the many as unreal?" he was asked. "Yes", answered the Swami, "And what Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and I have added to this is, that the Many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by the same mind at different times and in different attitudes."

THE LIFE OF THE SOUL

Gifted to an extraordinary degree with a living utterance of metaphysic, drawing always upon a classical literature of wonderful depth and profundity, he stood in our midst as, before all, the apostle of the inner life, the prophet of the subordination of the objective to the sub-

jective. "Remember!" he said once to a disciple, "Remember! the message of India is always *'Not the soul for Nature, but Nature for the soul!'*" And this was indeed the organ-note, as it were, the deep fundamental vibration, that began gradually to make itself heard through all the intellectual interest of the things he discussed, and the point of view he revealed. Like the sound of the flute, heard far away on the banks of some river in the hour of dawn, and regarded as but one amongst many sweet songs of the world; and like the same strain when the listener has drawn nearer and nearer, and at last, with his whole mind on the music, has become himself the player—may have seemed to some who heard him long, the difference between the life of the soul in Western thinking and in Eastern. And with this came the exaltation of renunciation. It was not, perhaps, that the word occurred in his teachings any oftener than it had done before. It was rather that the reality of that life, free, undimensioned, sovereign in its mastery, was making itself directly felt. A temptation that had to be fought against was the impulse to go away, and bind upon oneself intellectual shackles not to be borne, in order to be able to enter in its fulness upon the life of poverty and silence.

An occasion came, when this call was uttered with great force. Some dispute occurred in the course of a question-class. "What the world wants today," said the Swami,—the determination to "throw a bomb," as he called it, evidently taking sudden possession of him—"What the world wants today, is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go?" He had risen to his feet by this time, and stood looking round his audience as if begging some of them to join him. "Why should one fear?" And then, in tones of which. even now, I can hear again the thunderous conviction, "If this is true, what else could matter? *If it is not true, what do our lives matter?*"

"What the world wants is character," he says, in a letter written at this time to a member of his class. "The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love—selfless. That love will make every word tell like a thunderbolt. Awake, awake, great souls! The world is burning in misery. Can you sleep?"

THE SPIRIT BEHIND THE WORD

I remember how new to myself at that time was this Indian idea that it was character that made a truth tell, the love expressed that made aid successful, the degree of concentration behind a saying that gave it force and constituted its power. Thus the text 'consider the lilies, how they grow,' holds us, said the Swami, not by the spell of its beauty but by the depth of renunciation that speaks in it.

Was this true? I felt that the question might be tested by experience, and after some time I came to the conclusion that it was. A quiet word, from a mind that put thought behind language carried immediate weight, when the same utterance from the careless, would pass by unheeded. I do not know a stronger instance of this fact than a certain saying that is recorded of the Caliph Ali. Many have heard, and none surely without emotion, the words of the Lion of Islam, "Thy place in life is seeking after thee. Therefore be thou at rest from seeking after it!" But never until we relate them to the speaker, four times passed over in the succession to the Caliphate, never until we know how the man's whole life throbs through them, are we able to explain the extraordinary power of these simple sentences.

I found also that an utterance consciously directed to the mind, instead of merely to the hearing of the listener, evoked more response than the opposite. And having begun to make these psychological discoveries, I was led gradually to the perception that if indeed one's reason

could, as one had long thought, make no final line of demarcation as between mind and matter, yet at least that aspect of the One-substance which we called Matter was rather the result of that called Mind or Spirit, than the reverse. The body, not the will, must be regarded as a bye-product of the individuality. This in turn led to the conception of a consciousness held above the body, a life governing matter, and free of it, so that it might conceivably disrobe and find new garments, or cast off the form known to us, as that form itself casts off a wounded skin. Till at last I found my own mind echoing the Swami's great pronouncement on immortality, "The body comes and goes." But this ripening of thought came gradually and did not complete itself for many months.

REALISATIONS

In the meantime, as I look back upon that time, I feel that what we all really entered upon in the Swami's classes was not so much an intellectual exposition, as a life of new and lofty emotions,—or, as they would be called in India, 'realisations'.

We heard the exclamation, in describing the worship of God as a child, "do we *want* anything from Him?" We bowed to the teaching that "love is always a manifestation of bliss," and that any pang of pain or regret was therefore a mark of selfishness and physicality. We accepted the austere ruling that any, even the slightest impulse of differentiation, as between ourselves and others was 'hatred,' and that only the opposite of this was 'love'. Many who have ceased to believe in the creed of their childhood have felt that at least the good of others was still an end in itself, and that the possibility of service remained, to give a motive to life. It is strange, now that ten years have passed, to remember the sense of surprise with which, holding this opinion, we listened to the decorous eastern teaching, that highest of all gifts was spirituality, a degree

lower, intellectual knowledge, and that all kinds of physical and material help came last. All our welling pity for sickness and for poverty classified in this fashion! It has taken me years to find out, but I now know, that in train of the higher giving, the lower must needs follow.

PHYSICAL REFINEMENT IN INDIA

Similarly, to our Western fanaticism about pure air and hygienic surroundings, as if these were marks of saintliness, was opposed the stern teaching of indifference to the world. Here indeed, we came up against a closed door, and had no key. When the Swami said, in bold consciousness of paradox, that the saints had lived on mountain-tops "to enjoy the scenery," and when he advised his hearers to keep flowers and incense in their worship-rooms, and to care much for the purity and cleansing of food and person, we did not understand enough to connect the two extremes. But in fact he was preaching our own doctrine of physical refinement, as it would be formulated in India. And is it not true that until we in the West have succeeded in cleansing the slums of our great cities, our fastidiousness is very like the self-worship of the privileged?

A like fate awaited our admiration for such saints as knew how to order their worldly affairs with conspicuous success and prudence. True spirituality was indifferent to, nay contemptuous and intolerant of, the things of this world. This message the Swami never mitigated. In giving it, he never faltered. The highest spirituality cannot tolerate the world.

SPIRITUALITY, EAST AND WEST

We understood clearly enough that these were the ideals of sainthood only. We were learning chapter after chapter of a great language which was to make it easy for us to hold communion with the ends of the earth. We gathered no confusion as to those questions which concern the life of citizenship and domestic virtue, and form what

may be regarded as the kindergarten of the soul. The idea that one country might best advance itself by learning to appreciate those ideals of order and responsibility which formed the glory of another was in no wise discredited. At the same time we were given, as the eternal watchword of the Indian ideals, "Spirituality cannot tolerate the world." Did we, in contradiction, point to monastic orders, well-governed, highly organised, devoted to the public good, and contrast our long roll of abbots, bishops and saintly lady-abbesses, with a few ragged and God-intoxicated beggars of the East? Yet we had to admit that even in the West, when the flame of spirituality had blazed suddenly to its brightest, it had taken their form. For those who know the land of Meera Bae and Chaitanya, of Tukaram and Ramanuja, can hardly resist the impulse to clothe with the yellow garb the memory of St. Francis of Assisi also.

In one of the volumes of the English translation of the 'Jataka Birth-Tales,' there occur over and over again the words *"when a man has come to that place where he dreads heaven as much as hell"*,—and I do not know how the realisation that the Swami's presence brought could be better described. Most of those who listened to him in London, in the year 1896, caught some glimpse, by which they were led to understand a little of the meaning of the Eastern longing to escape from incarnation.

THE CROWN OF FREEDOM

But master of all these moods and dominating them, was one that had barely been hinted at, in the words, "If this is true, what other thing could matter? If it is not true, what do our lives matter?" For there was a power in this teacher to sum up all the truths he himself had come to teach, together with his own highest hope, and to treat the whole as a mean bribe, to be flung away fearlessly, if need were, for the good of others. Years after, this spoke more clearly in the indignant reply with which he

turned on some remark of my own, "Of course I would commit a crime, and go to hell for ever, if by that I could really help a human being!" It was the same impulse that spoke also, in his constant repetition to some few of us, as if it had a special bearing on the present age, of the tale of that Bodhisattva, who had held himself back from Nirvana till the last grain of dust in the universe should have gone in before him to salvation. Does it mean that the final mark of freedom lies in ceasing from the quest of freedom? I have found the same thing since, in many of the Indian stories; in Ramanuja, for instance, breaking his vow, and proclaiming the sacred Mantram to all the pariahs; in Buddha, keeping no secret, but spending his whole life in work; in Sishupal, choosing to be the enemy of God, that he might the sooner return to him; and in innumerable legends of the saints fighting against the deities.

But the Swami was not always entirely impersonal. Once after a lecture he came up to a small group of us, and said, *a propos* of some subject that had been opened up, "I have a superstition,—it is nothing, you know, but a personal superstition!—that the same soul who came once as Buddha came afterwards as Christ." And then, lingering on the point of departure, he drifted into talk of his "old Master," of whom we then heard for the first time, and of the girl who, wedded and forgotten, gave her husband his freedom with tears. His voice had sunk lower, as he talked, till the tones had become dream-like. But finally, almost in soliloquy, he shook off the mood that had stolen upon him, saying with a long breath, "Yes, yes! these things have been, and they will again be. Go in peace, my daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole!"

PERSONAL GLIMPSES

It was in the course of a conversation much more casual than this, that he turned to me and said, "I have plans for the women of my own country in which you,

I think, could be of great help to me," and I knew that I had heard a call which would change my life. What these plans were, I did not know, and the effort of abandoning the accustomed perspective was for the moment so great that I did not care to ask. But I had already gathered that there was much to learn, if one's conception of the world were to be made inclusive of the viewpoint of foreign peoples.—"And you have *blasted* other cities!" had once been the startling reply, when I had spoken of the necessity of making London fair. For to me the mystery and tragedy of London had long been the microcosm of the human problem, standing as the symbol of the whole world's call. "And you have *blasted* other cities, to make this city of yours beautiful!" I could elicit no more, but the words echoed in my ears for many days. In my eyes, our city was not beautiful. My question had been misunderstood. But through this misunderstanding, I had discovered that *there was another point of view.* "The English are born on an island, and they are always trying to live on it," said the Master once to me, and certainly the remark seems true of myself, as I look back on this period of my life, and see how determinately insular even my ideals had hitherto been. I learnt no more of the Indian point of view, during my life in England. The friend who afterwards called me to her side in India, chose a certain evening in London, when both the Swami and myself were her guests for an hour, to tell him of my willingness to help his work. He was evidently surprised, but said quietly, "For my own part I will be incarnated two hundred times, if that is necessary, to do this work amongst my people, that I have undertaken." And the words stand in my own mind beside those which he afterwards wrote to me on the eve of my departure, *"I will stand by you unto death,* whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta, or remain in it. The tusks of the elephant come out, but they never go back. Even so are the words of a man."

THE MESSAGE OF THE GURU

But these references to the Swami's own people were merely personal, and as such were strictly subordinate. In his classes, in his teachings, his one longing seemed to be for the salvation of men from ignorance. Such love, such pity, those who heard him never saw elsewhere. To him, his disciples were his disciples. There was neither Indian nor European there.

HISTORIC RELIGIONS

And yet he was profoundly conscious of the historic significance of his own preaching. On the occasion of his last appearance in London, (at the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, on Sunday afternoon, December the 15th, 1896) he pointed out the fact that history repeats itself, and that Christianity had been rendered possible only by the Roman Peace. And it may well have been that the Buddha-like dignity and calm of bearing which so impressed us, were but the expression of his far outlook and serene conviction that there would yet be seen a great army of Indian preachers in the West, reaping the harvest that he had sown so well, and making ready in their turn new harvests, for the more distant reaping of the future.

III

THE CONFLICT OF IDEALS

"He knew nothing of Vedanta, nothing of theories! He was contented to live that great life, and to leave it to others to explain." So said the Swami Vivekananda once, referring to his Master, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. And, as an expression of the idea that there may in a great life be elements which he who lives it may not himself understand, the words have often come back to me, in reference to his own career.

THE DUALITY OF LIFE

In the West, the Swami had revealed himself to us as a religious teacher only. Even now, it needs but a moment's thought and again one sees him in the old lecture-room, on the seat slightly raised above his class, and so enthroned, in Buddha-like calm, once more in a modern world is heard through his lips, the voice of the far past. But renunciation, the thirst after freedom, the breaking of bondage, the fire of purity, the joy of the witness, the mergence of the personal in the impersonal, these, and these alone, had been the themes of that discourse. It is true that in a flash or two one had seen a great patriot. Yet the secret signal is sufficient where destiny calls, and moments that to one form the turning-point of a life, may pass before the eyes of a hundred spectators, unperceived. It was as the apostle of Hinduism, not as a worker for India, that we saw the Swami in the West. "Oh how calm," he exclaimed, "would be the work of one, who really understood the divinity of man! For such, there is nothing to do, save to open men's eyes. All the rest does itself." And out of some such fathomless peace had come all that we had seen and heard of him.

From the moment of my landing in India, however, I found something quite unexpected underlying all this. It was not Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, nor even the ideas which were connected with him, that formed so strange a revelation here. It was the personality of my Master himself, in all the fruitless torture and struggle of a lion caught in a net. For, from the day that he met me at the ship's side, till that last serene moment, when, at the hour of cow-dust, he passed out of the village of this world, leaving the body behind him, like a folded garment, I was always conscious of this element inwoven with the other, in his life.

But wherein lay the struggle? Whence came the frequent sense of being baffled and thwarted? Was it a growing consciousness of bodily weakness, conflicting with the growing clearness of a great purpose? Amongst the echoes that had reached his English friends of his triumphal reception in India, this had been the note carried by a man-friend to my own ear. Banished to the Himalayas with shattered health, at the very moment when his power had reached its height, he had written a letter to his friend which was a cry of despair. And some of us became eager to take any step that might make it possible to induce him to return to the West, and leave his Indian undertakings on other shoulders. In making such arrangements, how little must we have realised of the nature of those undertakings, or of the difficulty and complexity of the education that they demanded!

THE RELIGION OF WORK

To what was the struggle actually due? Was it the terrible effort of translating what he had called the 'superconscious' into the common life? Undoubtedly he had been born to a task which was in this respect of heroic difficulty. Nothing in this world is so terrible as to abandon the safe paths of accepted ideals, in order to work out

some new realisation, by methods apparently in conflict with the old. Once, in his boyhood, Sri Ramakrishna had asked "Noren", as he was then called, what was his highest ambition in life, and he had promptly answered, "to remain always in Samadhi." His Master, it is said, received this with a smile. "I thought *you* had been born for something greater, my boy!" was all his reply. We may take it, I think, that the moment marked an epoch in the disciple's career. Certainly in years to come, in these last five and a half years, particularly, which were his crowning gift to his own people, he stood for work without attachment, or work for impersonal ends, as one of the highest expressions of the religious life. And for the first time in the history of India an order of monks found themselves banded together, with their faces set primarily towards the evolution of new forms of civic duty. In Europe, where the attainment of the direct religious sense is so much rarer, and so much less understood than in the East, such labour ranks as devotional in the common acceptance. But in India, the head and front of the demand made on a monastic order is that it produce saints. And the value of the monk who, instead of devoting himself to maintaining the great tradition of the super-conscious life, turns back to help society upwards, has not in the past been clearly understood.

SERVICE AS WORSHIP

In the Swami's scheme of things, however, it would almost seem as if such tasks were to take that place in the spiritual education which had previously been occupied by systems of devotion. To the Adwaitin, or strict believer in the Indian philosophy of Vedanta, the goal lies in the attainment of that mood in which all is One and there is no second. To one who has reached this, worship becomes impossible, for there is none to worship, none to be worshipper; and, all acts being equally the expression of

the Immanent Unity, none can be distinguished as in any special sense constituting adoration. Worship, worshipper, and worshipped are one. Yet it is admitted, even by the Adwaitin, that systems of praise and prayer have the power to "purify the heart" of him who uses them. For clearly, the thought of self is more quickly restrained in relation to that of God, than to any other. Worship is thus regarded as the school, or preparation, for higher stages of spiritual development. But the self-same sequence would seem to have held good in the eyes of the Swami, with regard to work, or the service of man.

THE PUBLIC GOOD

The "purifying of the heart" connoted the burning out of selfishness. Worship is the very antithesis of use. But service or giving is also its antithesis. Thus he hallowed the the act of aid, and hallowed, too, the name of man. Till I know of one disciple, who, in the early days of the Order, was so filled with the impulse of this reverence that he sucked the sores of the lepers to bring them ease. The nursing of the sick and the feeding of the poor, had indeed from the first been natural activities of the Children of Ramakrishna. But when the Swami Vivekananda returned from the West these things took on a larger aspect. They were considered from a national point of view. Men would be sent out from the Monastery to give relief in famine-stricken areas, to direct the sanitation of a town, or to nurse the sick and dying at a pilgrim centre. One man started an orphanage and industrial school at Murshidabad. Another established a teaching nucleus in the South. These were, said the Swami, the 'sappers and miners' of the army of religion. His schemes however went much farther. He was consumed with a desire for the education of Indian women, and for the scientific and technical education of the country. How the impersonal motive multiplies the power to suffer,

only those who have seen can judge. Was his life indeed a failure, as he was sometimes tempted to feel it, since there never came to his hands that "twenty million pounds" with which, as he used to say, he could have set India on her feet? Or were there higher laws at work, that would eventually make a far greater success than any that could have been gathered within a single lifetime?

THE PAIN OF THE PIONEER

His view was penetrative as well as comprehensive. He had analysed the elements of the development to be brought about. India must learn a new ideal of obedience. The Math was placed, therefore, on a basis of organization which was contrary to all the current ideas of religious freedom. A thousand new articles of use must be assimilated. Therefore, though his own habits were of the simplest, two or three rooms were provided with furniture. Digging, gardening, rowing, gymnastic exercises, the keeping of animals, all these were by degrees made a part of the life of the young Brahmacharins and himself. And he would throw a world of enthusiasm into a long course of experiments on such problems as the sinking of a well or the making of brown bread. On the last Charok Puja day of his life a gymnastic society came to the Math for sports and prizes, and he spoke of his desire that the Hindu Lent should be celebrated henceforth by special courses of athletic exercises. The energy which had hitherto gone into the mortification of the body, might rightly, in his opinion, under modern conditions, be directed to the training of the muscles.

HIS DOUBT OF THE PRESENT

To a Western mind, it might well seem that nothing in the Swami's life had been more admirable than this. Long ago, he had defined the mission of the Order of Ramakrishna as that of realizing and exchanging the highest ideals of the East and of the West. And assuredly

he here proved his own power to engage in such an undertaking as much by his gift of learning as by that of teaching. But it was inevitable that he himself should from time to time go through the anguish of revolt. The Hindu ideal of the religious life, as a reflection on earth of that of the Great God in the Divine Empyrean,—the Unmoving, the Untouched, "pure, free, ever the Witness,"—is so clear and so deeply established that only at great cost to himself could a man carry it into a fresh channel. Has anyone realized the pain endured by the sculptor of a new ideal? The very sensitiveness and delicacy of perception that are necessary to his task, that very moral exaltation which is as the chisel in his hand, are turned on himself in passive moments, to become doubt and terror of responsibility. What a heaven of ease seems then, to such a soul, even the hardest and sternest of those lives that are understood and authenticated by the imitative moral sense of the crowd! I have noticed in most experiences this consciousness of being woven out of two threads, one that is chosen and another endured. But in this case the common duality took the form of a play upon two different ideals, of which either was highest in its own world, and yet each, to those who believed in its fellow, almost as a crime.

Occasionally, to one who was much with him, a word. let fall unconsciously, would betray the inner conflict. He was riding on one occasion, with the Raja of Khetri, when he saw that his arm was bleeding profusely, and found that the wound had been caused by a thorny branch which he had held aside for himself to pass. When the Swami expostulated, the Rajput laughed the matter aside, "Are we not always the Defenders of the Faith, Swamiji?" he said. "And then," said the Swami, telling the story, "I was just going to tell him that they ought not to show such honour to the Sannyasin, when suddenly I thought that perhaps they were right after all. Who knows? May be I too am caught in the glare of this flashlight of your modern civilisation, which is only for a moment." "—I

have become entangled," he said simply, to one who protested that to his mind the wandering Sadhu of earlier years, who had scattered his knowledge and changed his name as he went, had been greater than the Abbot of Belur, burdened with much work and many cares, "I have become entangled." And I remember the story told by an American woman, who said she could not bear to remember his face, at that moment when her husband explained to this strange guest that he must make his way from their home to Chicago with money which would be paid gladly to hear him speak of religion. "It was," she said "as if something had just broken within him, that could never again be made whole." One day he was talking, in the West, of Meera Bae,—that saint who once upon a time was Queen of Chitore,—and of the freedom her husband had offered her, if only she would remain within the royal seclusion. But she could not be bound. "But why should she not?" some one asked, in astonishment. "Why should she?" he retorted. "Was she living down here *in this mire*?" And suddenly the listener caught his thought of the whole nexus of the personal life, with its inter-relations and reaction upon reactions, as intolerable bondage and living anguish.

And so, side by side with that sunlit serenity and child-like peace which enwrapped the Swami as a religious teacher, I found in his own country another point of view, from which he was very, very human. And here, though the results of his efforts may have been choicer, or more enduring, than those of most of us, yet they were wrought at the self-same cost of having to toil on in darkness and uncertainty, and only now and then emerging into light. Often dogged by the sense of failure, often overtaken by a loathing of the limitations imposed alike by the instrument and the material, he dared less and less, as years went on, to make determinate plans, or to dogmatize about the unknown. "After all, what do we know?" he said once, "Mother uses it all. But we are only fumbling about."

INDIA THE MOTHER

This has not perhaps been an element in the lives of the great teachers on which their narrators have cared to dwell much. Yet one catches a hint of it in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, when we are told how he turned on God with the reproach, "Oh Mother! what is this You have brought me to? All my heart is centred in these lads!" And in the eleventh chapter of the Dhammapada one can see still, though twenty-four centuries have passed since then, the wave-marks of similar storms on the shores of the consciousness of another Teacher.*

RESPONSE TO INDIA

There was one thing however, deep in the Master's nature, that he himself never knew how to adjust. This was his love of his country and his resentment of her suffering. Throughout those years in which I saw him almost daily, the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. True, he was a worker at foundations. He neither used the word 'nationality', nor proclaimed an era of 'nation-making'. 'Man-making', he said, was his own task. But he was born a lover, and the queen of his adoration was his Motherland. Like some delicately-poised bell, thrilled and vibrated by every sound that falls upon it, was his heart to all that concerned her. Not a sob was heard within her shores that did not find in him a responsive echo. There was no cry of fear, no tremor of weakness, no shrinking from mortification, that he had not known and understood. He was hard on her sins, unsparing of her want of worldly wisdom, but only because he felt these faults to be his own. And none, on the contrary, was ever so possessed by the vision of her greatness. To him, she appeared as the

* Seeking for the maker of this tabernacle and not finding, I must run through a course of many births; and painful is birth again and again. But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen! Thou shalt not again build up this tabernacle. All thy rafters are fallen. Thy ridge-pole is broken. The mind, approaching the Eternal, has attained to the extinction of all desires.

giver of English civilization. For what, he would ask, had been the England of Elizabeth in comparison with the India of Akbar? Nay, what would the England of Victoria have been, without the wealth of India, behind her? Where would have been her refinement? Where would have been her experience? His country's religion, history, geography, ethonology, poured from his lips in an inexhaustible stream. With equal delight he treated of details and of the whole, or so it would often seem to those who listened. Indeed there would sometimes come a point where none who wished to remember what had been said already, could afford to listen any longer. And still, with mind detached, one might note the unwearied stream of analysis of the laws regarding female inheritance, or the details of caste customs in different provinces, or some abstruse system of metaphysics or theology, proceeding on and on for a couple of hours longer.

THE EPIC OF INDIA

In these talks of his, the heroism of the Rajput, the faith of the Sikh, the courage of the Mahratta, the devotion of the saints, and the purity and steadfastness of the noble women, all lived again. Nor would he permit that the Mohammedan should be passed over. Humayoon, Sher Shah, Akbar, Shah Jehan, each of these, and a hundred more, found a day and a place in his bead-roll of glistening names. Now it was that coronation song of Akbar which is still sung about the streets of Delhi, that he would give us, in the very tone and rhythm of Thanasena. Again, he would explain how the widows of the Mogul House never remarried, but lived like Hindu women, absorbed in worship or in study, through the lonely years. At another time he would talk of the great national genius that decreed the birth of Indian sovereigns to be of a Moslem father and of a Hindu mother. And yet again he would hold us breathless, as we lived through with him the bright, but ill-starred reign of Sirajud-Daulah; as we heard the ex-

clamation at Plassy of the Hindu general, listening to an order sent in treachery, "Then is the day lost!" and saw him plunge, with his horse, into the Ganges; as, finally, we lingered with the faithful wife, clad in the white sari of the widow amongst her own people, through long years tending the lamp above the grave of her dead lord.

THE LOVE OF INDIA

Sometimes the talk would be more playful. It would arise out of some commonplace incident. The offering of a sweetmeat, or the finding of a rare commodity like musk or saffron, or events simpler still, would be enough to start it. He told us how he had longed, when in the West, to stand once more at dusk some little way outside an Indian village and hear again the evening calls,—the noise of children growing sleepy at their play, the evensong bells, the cries of the herdsmen, and the half-veiled sound of voices through the quickly-passing twilight. How homesick he had been for the sound of the July rains, as he had known them in his childhood in Bengal! How wonderful was the sound of water, in rain, or waterfall, or sea! The most beautiful sight he could remember was a mother whom he had seen, passing from stepping-stone to stepping-stone across a mountain brook and turning as she went, to play with and caress the baby on her back. The ideal death would be to lie on a ledge of rock in the midst of Himalayan forests, and hear the torrent beneath, as one passed out of the body, chanting eternally 'Hara! ! Hara! The Free! The Free!'

Like some great spiral of emotion, its lowest circles held fast in love of soil and love of nature; its next embracing every possible association of race, experience, history, and thought; and the whole converging and centring upon a single definite point, was thus the Swami's worship of his own land. And the point in which it was focussed was the conviction that India was not old and effete, as her critics had supposed, but young, ripe with

potentiality, and standing, at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the threshold of even greater developments than she had known in the past. Only once, however, do I remember him to have given specific utterance to this thought. "I feel myself" he said in a moment of great quiet, "to be the man born after many centuries. *I see that India is young.*" But in truth this vision was implied in every word he ever spoke. It throbbed in every story he told. And when he would lose himself, in splendid scorn of apology for anything Indian, in fiery repudiation of false charge or contemptuous criticism or in laying down for others the elements of a faith and love that could never be more than a pale reflection of his own, how often did the habit of the monk seem to slip away from him, and the armour of the warrior stand revealed!

But it is not to be supposed that he was unaware of the temptations of which all this implied. His Master had said of him, in the years of his first discipleship, "It is true that there is a film of ignorance upon his mind. My Mother has placed it there, that Her work may be done. And it is thin, as thin as a sheet of tissue paper. It might be rent at any moment!" And so, as one who has forsworn them will struggle against thoughts of home and family, he would endeavour, time and again, to restrain and suppress these thoughts of country and history, and to make of himself only that poor religious wanderer, to whom all countries and all races should be alike. He came back, in Kashmir, from one of the great experiences of his life, saying, with the simplicity of a child, "There must be no more of this anger. Mother said 'What even if the unbeliever should enter My temples, and defile My images, what is that to you? Do YOU PROTECT ME? OR DO I PROTECT YOU?' "

His personal ideal was that Sannyasin of the Mutiny, who was stabbed by an English soldier, and broke the silence of fifteen years to say to his murderer, "—And thou also art He!"

INSTINCT NOT THEORY

He was always striving to be faithful to the banner of Ramakrishna, and the utterance of a message of his own seemed often to strike him as a lapse. Besides, he believed that force spent in mere emotion was dissipated, only force restrained being conserved for expression in work. Yet again the impulse to give all he had would overtake him and before he knew it, he would once more be scattering those thoughts of hope and love for his race and for his country, which, apparently without his knowledge, fell in so many cases like seed upon soil prepared for it, and have sprung up already, in widely distant parts of India, into hearts and lives of devotion to the Motherland. Just as Sri Ramakrishna, in fact, without knowing any books, had been a living epitome of the Vedanta, so was Vivekananda of the national life. But of the theory of this, he was unconscious. In his own words, applied to his own Master, "He was contented simply to live that great life, and to leave it to others to find the explanation!"

IV

THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE ORDER OF RAMAKRISHNA

It was amongst the lawns and trees of the Ganges-side that I came to know, in a personal sense, the leader to whose work my life was already given. At the time of my landing in India (January 28th, 1898), the ground and building had just been purchased at Belur, which were afterwards to be transformed into the Calcutta Monastery of the Order of Ramakrishna. A few weeks later still, a party of friends arrived from America, and with characteristic intrepidity took possession of the half-ruined cottage to make it simply but pleasantly habitable. It was as the guest of these friends, here at Belur, and later, travelling in Kumaon and in Kashmir, that I began, with them, the study of India, and something also of the home-aspects and relationships of the Swami's own life.

MORNING TALKS

Our cottage stood on a low terrace, built on the western bank of the river, a few miles above Calcutta. At flood-tide the little gondola-like boat,—which to those who live beside the Ganges serves the purpose of a carriage,—could come up to the very foot of the steps, and the river between us and the opposite village, was from half to three-quarters of a mile broad. A mile or so further up the eastern bank, could be seen the towers and trees of Dakshineshwar, that temple-garden in which the Swami and his brothers had once been boys, at the feet of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. The house which was in actual use at that time as the Monastery, lay some half mile or so to the south of our cottage, and between us and it were several other garden-houses, and at least one ravine, crossed by a doubtful-looking

plank made out of half of the stem of a palm tree. To our cottage here, then, came the Swami daily, at sunrise, alone or accompanied by some of his brothers. And here, under the trees, long after our early breakfast was ended, we might still be found seated, listening to that inexhaustible flow of interpretation, broken but rarely by question and answer, in which he would reveal to us some of the deepest secrets of the Indian world. I am struck afresh whenever I turn back upon this memory, by the wonder as to how such a harvest of thought and experience could possibly have been garnered, or how, when once ingathered, could have come such energy of impulse for its giving-forth. Amongst brilliant conversationalists, the Swami was peculiar in one respect. He was never known to show the slightest impatience at interruption. He was by no means indifferent as to the minds he was addressing. His deepest utterances were heard only in the presence of such listeners as brought a subtle sympathy and reverence into the circle about him. But I do not think he was himself aware of this, and certainly no external circumstance seemed to have power to ruffle him. Moods of storm and strength there were in plenty; but they sprang, like those of sweetness, from hidden sources; they were entirely general and impersonal in their occasion.

EASTERN IDEALS

It was here that we learnt the great outstanding watchwords and ideals of the Indian striving. For the talks were, above all, an exposition of ideals. Facts and illustrations were gathered, it is true, from history, from literature and from a thousand other sources. But the purpose was always the same, to render some Indian ideal of perfection clearer. Nor were these ideals always so comprehensible as might have been supposed. This was a world in which concentration of mind was the object of more deliberate cultivation than even the instincts of benevolence could require, but the time was not yet come in which this

was to be argued as for or against India. The attainment of the impersonal standpoint was boldly proposed, in matters personal. "Be the Witness!" was a command heard oftener than that which bids us pray for our enemies. The idea of recognizing an enemy would have seemed to this mind a proof of hatred. Love was not love, it was insisted, unless it was 'without a reason,' or without a 'motive,' as a Western speaker might have attempted, though perhaps with less force, to express the same idea. Purity and renunciation were analysed untiringly. The Great God, tempted by nothing—not kingship nor fatherhood; not wealth nor pleasure;—in all the worlds He had created, proving on the contrary, in matters worldly, 'a very simple fellow,' incurious, easily deceived, and begging His daily handful of rice from door to door, shone through all our dreams. Titiksha or non-correction of evil was a mark of the religious life, and of this we might find a Western example in that monk who was a leper, and who, when the maggots fell from his finger-joints, stooped and replaced them, saying, "Eat, brothers!" The vision of Raghunath was one of the perfections of the soul, and that saint had had it, who fainted, when the bullocks were beaten in his presence, while on his back were found the weals made by the lash. We were even called upon to understand a thought immeasurably foreign to all our past conceptions of religion, in which sainthood finds expression in an unconsciousness of the body, so profound that the saint is unaware that he goes naked. For that delicate discrimination of a higher significance in certain cases of nudity, which, in Europe, finds its expression in art, in India finds it in religion. As we, in the presence of a Greek statue, experience only reverence for the ideal of beauty, so the Hindu sees in the naked saint only a glorified and childlike purity.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

There was one aspiration, however, which was held, in this new thought-world, to be of the same sovereign and universal application in the religious life as that of the concentration of the mind. This was the freedom of the individual soul, including all the minor rights of thought, opinion, and action. Here lay the one possession that the monk was jealously to guard as his own, the one property on which he must brook the foot of no intruder; and as I watched the working out of this, in daily life, I saw that it amounted to a form of renunciation. To accept nothing, however pleasant, if it concealed a fetter; at a word to stand ready to sever any connection that gave a hint of bondage; how clear must be the mind that would do this, how pure the will! And yet this ideal, too, was eloquent of many things. One could not help seeing that it accounted for the comparative non-development of monasticism in India, for the fact that the highest types of the religious life in the past, had been solitary, whether as hermits or wanderers. In the monastery beside us there were men, as we were told, who did not approve of their leader's talking with women; there were others who objected to all rites and ceremonies; the religion of one might be described as atheism tempered by hero-worship; that of another led him to a round of practices which to most of us would constitute an intolerable burden; some lived in a world of saints, visions and miracles; others again could not away with such nonsense, but must needs guide themselves by the coldest logic. The fact that all these could be bound together in a close confraternity, bore silent witness to their conception of the right of the soul to choose its own path. It also, as I could not help thinking, both then and after, accounted for the failure, in certain respects, of the old Indian forms of authority. For, in order that the highest and most disinterested characters may throw themselves into the work of the city and the state, it is surely

necessary that they should sincerely hold the task of such organisation to be the highest and most honourable which they could aspire to carry out. In the India of the past, however, the best men had been too conscious of the more remote spiritual ideals, and amongst them, of this conception of freedom, to be capable of such an enthusiasm for the assertion of the civic and national discipline. And we cannot wonder that in spite of the existence of ability and character, certain advantages of the modern system have thus been left for the moderns to demonstrate. That Hinduism, nevertheless, is capable enough of adding to her development that of the inspiration and sustenance of such activities, is shown, as I believe, in the very fact of the rise of Ramakrishna and his disciple Vivekananda, with their characteristic contribution to the national thought.

THE EXCHANGE OF IDEALS

It was perhaps as an instance of that 'exchange of ideals' which he had ever in mind, that the Swami gravely warned us again and again, as the great fault of the Western character, against making any attempt to force upon others that which we had merely found to be good for ourselves. And yet at the same time, when asked by some of his own people what he considered, after seeing them in their own country, to be the greatest achievement of the English, he answered, 'that they had known how to combine obedience with self-respect'.

But it was not the Swami alone whom we saw at Belur. We were accounted by the monastery as a whole, as its guests. So back and forth would toil the hospitable monks, on errands of kindness and service for us. They milked the cow that gave us our supply, and when the servant whose duty it was at nightfall to carry the milk, was frightened by the sight of a cobra in the path, and refused to go again, it was one of the monks themselves who took his place in this humble office. Some novice would be

deputed daily, to deal with the strange problems of our Indian house-keeping. Another was appointed to give Bengali lessons. Visits of ceremony and of kindness were frequently paid us by the older members of the community. And finally, when the Swami Vivekananda himself was absent for some weeks on a journey, his place was always duly taken at the morning tea-table by some one or another who felt responsible for the happiness and entertainment of his guests. In these and a thousand similar ways, we came in touch with those who could reveal to us the shining memory that formed the warp, on which, as woof, were woven all these lives of renunciation.

For they had only one theme, these monastic visitants of ours, and that was their Master Sri Ramakrishna and his great disciple. The Swami had now been back with them for thirteen or fourteen months only, and scarcely yet had they recovered from their first pleasure and surprise. Before that he had been practically lost to them for some six years. It was true that of late he had corresponded with them freely, and that for no time had they been, long, altogether off his track. And yet, when his first success in America had been heard of, most of his brethren had had only their confidence in the great mission foretold by his Master, to tell them that it was he.

A FIRST RECRUIT

Those who have witnessed here or there some great life of asceticism, will recognise a mood of passionate longing to lose one's own identity, to be united with the lowliest and most hidden things, to go forth from amongst men, and be no more remembered by them, as an element in the impulse of renunciation. This it is which explains, as I think, the long silence and seclusion in caves; the garb of mud and ashes, so often worn as a man wanders from forest to forest, and village to village; and a thousand other features of this type of religion, which to the Western

onlooker might seem inexplicable. This mood would seem to have been much with the Swami in the early years after the passing of his Master. And again and again he must have left the little band of brethren, in the hope never to be heard of more. Once he was brought back from such an expedition by the community itself, who heard that he was lying ill at a place called Hathras, and sent to take him home. For such was the love that bound them all to each other, and especially to him, that they could not rest without nursing him themselves. A few months later he was followed to the monastery by a disciple whom he had called to himself during his wanderings. This man's name, in religion, was Sadananda, and from his account, with its strong broken English, I glean the record of the life that was lived at this period in the monastery. When he arrived—it had taken him some two or three months, by means of railway service, to earn his way to Calcutta from his old home—he found the Swami on the point of setting out once more. But for his sake this journey was abandoned, and the departure that was to have taken place that evening did not occur till twelve months later. "The Swami's mission began with me," says this first disciple proudly, referring to this time.

THE FIRST LOVE

During this year, he the Master, "would work twenty-four hours at a time. He was lunatic-like, he was so busy!" Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he would rise and call the others, singing, "Awake! Awake! all ye who would drink of the divine nectar!" Then all would proceed to meditation, afterwards drifting almost unconsciously into singing and talking, which would last till noon, or even later. From hymns and chanting they would pass into history. Sometimes it would be the story of Ignatius Loyola ; again Joan of Arc, or the Rani of Jhansi ; and yet again the Swami would recite long passages from Carlyle's

French Revolution, and they would all sway themselves backwards and forwards dreamily, repeating together "Vive la Republique! Vive la Republique!" Or the subject of their reveries might be S. Francis of Assisi, and with the same unconscious instinct of the dramatist, they would lose themselves in an endless identification with his "Welcome, Sister Death!" It might perhaps be one or two o'clock when Ramakrishnananda—the cook, house-keeper, and ritualist of the community—would drive them all, with threats to bathe and eat. But after this, they would "again group"—again would go on the song and talk, till at last evening had come bringing with it the time for the two hours of Arati to Sri Ramakrishna. As often as not, even this would scarcely break the absorption, again would follow song, and talk of the Master; again would come the trances of meditation. Or on the roof, till long after midnight it might be, they would sit and chant "Hail Sita Rama!" The special festivals of all religions brought each their special forms of celebration. At Christmas time, for instance, they would recline, with long shepherds' crooks, around a lighted log, and talk in low tones of the coming of the angels to the lonely watchers by their flocks, and the singing of the world's first Gloria. Very curious is the story of how they kept Good Friday. Hour after hour had gone by, and they had risen gradually to that terrible exaltation of spirit which comes to those who give themselves to that day. Food was not to be thought of, but they had contrived to have by them a few grapes, and the juice was squeezed out, and mixed with water, to be drunk out of a single cup by all. In the midst of such scenes, the voice of a European was heard at the door, calling on them, in the name of Christ. With. inexpressible delight they swarmed down on him, twelve or fifteen men of them, eager to hear of the day from the lips of a Christian. "—But he said he belonged to the Salvation Army and knew nothing about Good Friday. They only kept General Booth's birthday and something else, I forget what," said Sadananda,

and in the cloud that overcast the face and voice of the teller, one could realize the sudden depression that fell, at this discovery, upon the monks. It seems that in their first disappointment, they snatched his Bible from the unfortunate missionary, saying he was not worthy to possess it, and drove him forth. It is said however that one of their number stole round by another door and brought him back to eat and have his property secretly restored to him.

THE GREAT PREPARATION

"Those were hot days," says the teller of the tale with his face aglow, "there was no minute of rest. Outsiders came and went, pundits argued and discussed. But, he, the Swami, was never for one moment idle, never dull. Sometimes he was left alone for a while and he would walk up and down, saying, 'Hari bol! bol! bol! Call on the Lord! Call! Call!' or 'Oh Mother!' in all these ways preparing himself for his great work. And I watched all the time from a distance and in some interval said, 'Sir, will you not eat?'—always to be answered playfully." Sometimes the talk took place while cooking was going on or during the service of the altar, offices in which all shared without distinction. For in spite of the poverty of those days, many came to the monks to be fed. Their own resources were scanty. They had only one piece of cloth amongst them that was good enough to be worn across the shoulders, outside the monastery. So this was kept on a line and used by anyone who went out. And they could afford no more. Yet food was found somehow for the poor and for guests, and many came for help or teaching. They begged funds enough also, to buy and distribute some hundreds of copies of the Bhagavad Gita and the Imitation, the two favourite books of the Order at that time. "Silence, all ye teachers! And silence, ye prophets! Speak Thou alone, O Lord, unto my soul!" was, years after, a sentence that the Swami quoted at a venture as all that he then

remembered of Thomas â Kempis. For it is perhaps needless to say that while this book took its place by degrees amongst experiences remembered, the Gita grew every day in fulness of power and beauty in the minds of these Hindu children of Ramakrishna.

GLIMPSES OF EARLY DAYS

So passed some twelve months. Then the Swami went away to Ghazipur to visit Pavhari Baba,* that saint whom he always held second only to Ramakrishna. He came back in a couple of months to share the treasure he had gained with others. Suddenly news came that one of the brothers, by name Yogananda, was lying ill with small-pox at Allahabad, and a party followed by the Swami, started to nurse him.

At Allahabad, to take up once more Sadananda's account, many days were passed in religious education. It was as if Yogananda's sickness had been a mere incident, a call given through him, and the whole town came and went in a great stirring. Small groups would enter and leave, in a constant succession for days and nights together, the Swami being always in his highest and greatest mood. On one occasion he saw a Mohammedan saint, a Paramahamsa, "whose every line and curve told that he was a Paramahamsa," and this was the occasion of a great hour.

"Sometimes naked, sometimes mad,
Now as a scholar, again as a fool,
Here a rebel, there a saint,
Thus they appear on the earth, the Paramahamsas."

—So repeating "The Marks of the Paramahamsas" from the Viveka Chudamoni of Shankaracharya, there passed, as the disciple would put it, "a whole night fermenting". Such experiences lasted perhaps for two weeks, and then the party left Allahabad, and by twos and threes returned to

* Pavhari Baba was a saint who lived near Ghazipur. He died by burning, in 1898.

the monastery, in the village of Baranagore on the banks of the Ganges. But now there came a time, in the year 1890, when the Swami left his brothers, not to return till the great triumph of the year 1897.

THE WANDERING FRIAR

This time he set out with a monk known as Akhandananda, who took him to Almora and left him there, enjoying the hospitality of a family who had formerly befriended himself on a journey to Thibet. It is said that on the way up the mountains, the Swami one day fainted with hunger, when a poor Mohammedan found him, and prepared and gave him a cucumber, which practically saved his life. How long the brothers had been without food I do not know. It may have been that at this time, as certainly later, he was under the vow to ask for nothing, waiting always for food and drink till they were offered. He told some one who knew him during that period and questioned him, that the longest time he had ever gone without food, under this austerity, was five days.

After this, the thread of his wanderings was lost. He wrote occasionally, but the monks themselves were scattered. 'It had been so dull after they lost him!' says the narrator. And even the first home had to be abandoned, for the landlord talked of rebuilding. There was one monk, however, Ramakrishnananda by name, who would not leave the ashes of their Master, but vowed, with rock-like determination, to keep a roof overhead, come storm, come shine, so to speak, for them and for his brothers, till they should all foregather in their worship-room once more. He, then, with Nirmalananda, the occasional resident, one Premananda, and the new member of the fold, 'as dish-washer,' removed to a house, some distance away, but still in the immediate neighbourhood of Dakshineshwar, and the monastery which had previously been at Baranagore was now known as the Alumbazar Math.

THE LEADER LOST

Akhandananda at this time was always 'chasing', always in pursuit of the absent leader. Every now and then he would hear of him in some town, and would arrive there, only in time to hear that he was gone, leaving no trace. Once the Swami Trigunatita found himself in trouble in a Guzerati state, when some one said that a Bengali Sadhu was staying with the Prime Minister, and if he appealed to him, would surely give him aid. He made his appeal, and found that the unknown Sadhu was the Swami himself. But he, after rendering the assistance that was needed, sent his brother onwards, and himself proceeded alone. The great words of Buddha, constantly quoted by him, "Even as the lion, not trembling at noises, even as the wind, not caught in a net, even as the lotus-leaf untouched by the water, so do thou wander alone, like the rhinoceros!" were the guiding principle of his life at this time.

It had been at Almora, as we now know, that news reached him, of the death, in pitiful extremity, of the favourite sister of his childhood, and he had fled into the wilder mountains, leaving no clue. To one who, years after, saw deep into his personal experience, it seemed that this death had inflicted on the Swami's heart a wound, whose quivering pain had never for one moment ceased. And we may, perhaps, venture to trace some part at least of his burning desire for the education and development of Indian women to this sorrow.

At this time he passed some months in a cave overhanging a mountain-village. Only twice have I known him to allude to this experience. Once he said, "Nothing in my whole life ever so filled me with the sense of work to be done. It was as if I were *thrown out* from that life in caves to wander to and fro in the plains below." And again he said to some one, "It is not the form of his life that makes a Sadhu. For it is possible to sit in a cave and

have one's whole mind filled with the question of how many pieces of bread will be brought to one for supper!"

A VOW OF PILGRIMAGE

It was perhaps at the end of this period, and in expression of that propulsive energy of which he spoke, that he made a vow to worship the Mother at Cape Comorin. In carrying this out, he was lavish of time, yet it must have taken him only about two years to accomplish the vow. In the course of his wanderings towards this end, he seems to have touched upon and studied every phase of Indian life. The stories of this period are never ended. The list of the friends he made is never full. He received the initiation of the Sikhs; studied the Mimansa Philosophy with Mahratta Pundits; and the Jain Scriptures with Jains; was accepted as their Guru by Rajput princes; lived for weeks with a family of sweepers, in Central India; was able to observe at first-hand such obscure questions as the caste-customs of Malabar; saw many of the historic sights and natural beauties of his motherland, and finally reached Cape Comorin too poor to pay for a seat in a ferry-boat to the shrine of Kanya Kumari, and swam across the strait to the island, in spite of sharks, to offer the worship he had vowed.* It was on his return northwards through Madras, that he formed the strong group of disciples who became the means of sending him to America, for which country he sailed finally from Bombay about the beginning of June 1893.

THE CALL OF DESTINY

Even this however he was not eager to do. His disciples in Madras still tell how the first five hundred rupees collected for the object were immediately spent by

* The author herself did not visit this pilgrimage. So a slight mistake has crept into the narration. The fact is, there is a small rocky island on the South of the Shrine, separated by a short strait; Swamiji in his desire to go outside India swam across the strait to the island.—Ed.

him in worship and charity, as if he would *force* on his own destiny, as it were, the task of driving him forth. Even when he reached Bombay, he was still waiting for the feeling of certainty. Struggling to refuse the undertaking, he felt as if the form of his own Master appeared to him constantly, and urged him to go. At last he wrote secretly to Sarada Devi, the widow of Sri Ramakrishna, begging her, if she could, to advise and bless him, and charging her to tell no one of this new departure, till she could hear from him again. It was only after receiving, in answer to this letter, her warm encouragement, and the assurance of her prayers, that he actually left India for the West. Now, at last, there was no escaping fate. That quest of forgottenness that had first borne him out of the doors of the monastery, had led him also to change his name in each Indian village that he reached. And in later years some one heard from him how, after his first great speech at Chicago, the mingling of the bitterness of this defeat with the cup of his triumphant achievement, racked his consciousness all night long. He stood now in the glare of publicity. The unknown beggar could remain unknown no more!

In these wanderings through India, I find the third and final element in my Master's realization of that great body of truth, which was to find in him at once its witness and its demonstration.

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

There can be no doubt, I think, that the formative influences in his life were threefold: first, his education in English and Sanskrit literature; second, the great personality of his Guru, illustrating and authenticating that life which formed the theme of all the sacred writings; and thirdly, as I would maintain his personal knowledge of India and the Indian peoples, as an immense religious organism, of which his Master himself, with all his greatness, had been only, as it were, the personification and utterance.

And these three sources can, as I think, be distinctly traced in his various utterances. When he preaches Vedanta and upholds before the world the philosophy of his people, he is for the most part drawing upon the Sanskrit books of past ages, though, it is true, with a clearness and certainty of touch that could only be the result of having seen them summed up in a single wonderful life. When he talks of Bhakti as of "a devotion beginning, continuing and ending in love," or when he analyzes Karma Yoga, 'the secret of work,' we see before us the very personality of the Master himself, we realize that the disciple is but struggling to tell of that glorified atmosphere in which he himself has dwelt at the feet of another. But when we read his speech before the Chicago Conference, or his equally remarkable "Reply to the Madras Address," or the lectures in which at Lahore, in 1897, he portrayed the lineaments of a generalized and essential Hinduism, we find ourselves in presence of something gathered by his own labours, out of his own experience. The power behind all these utterances lay in those Indian wanderings of which the tale can probaly never be complete. It was of the first-hand knowledge, then, and not of vague sentiment or wilful blindness, that his reverence for his own people and their land was born. It was a robust and cumulative induction, moreover, be it said, ever hungry for new facts, and dauntless in the face of hostile criticism. 'The common bases of Hinduism had,' as he once said, 'been the study of his whole life.' And more than this, it was the same thorough and first-hand knowledge that made the older and simpler elements in Hindu civilization loom so large in all his conceptions of his race and country. Possessed of a modern education that ranked with the most advanced in his own country, he yet could not, like some moderns, ignore the Sannyasin or the peasant, the idolator or the caste-ridden, as elements in the great whole called India. And this determined inclusiveness was due to that life in which he had for years together been united with them.

HIS LOVE OF THE PEOPLE

It must be remembered, however, that we have not entirely analyzed a great career when we have traced, to their origin in the personal experience, those ideas which form its dominant notes. There is still the original impulse, the endowment of perennial energy that makes the world-spectacle so much more full of meaning to one soul than to another, to be accounted for. And I have gathered that from his very cradle Vivekananda had a secret instinct that told him he was born to help his country. He was proud afterwards to remember that amidst the temporal vicissitudes of his early days in America, when sometimes he did not know where to turn for the next meal, his letters to his disciples in India showed that this innate faith of his had never wavered. Such an indomitable hope resides assuredly in all souls who are born to carry out any special mission. It is a deep unspoken consciousness of greatness, of which life itself is to be the sole expression. To Hindu thinking, there is a difference as of the poles, between such consciousness of greatness and vanity, and this is seen, as I think, in the Swami himself at the moment of his first meeting with Sri Ramakrishna, when he was decidedly repelled, rather than attracted, by what he regarded as the old man's exaggerated estimate of his powers and of himself.

He had come, a lad of fifteen, as member of a party visiting Dakshineshwar, and some one, probably knowing the unusual quality of his voice, and his knowledge of music, suggested that he should sing. He responded with a song of Ram Mohun Roy's,* ending with the words, "And for support keep the treasure in secret purity."

THE MASTER'S RECOGNITION

This seems to have acted like a signal—"My boy! my boy!" cried Sri Ramakrishna. "I have been looking for

* The song in question was composed by Ajodhyanath Pakrasi.

you these three years, and you have come at last!" From that day the older man may be said to have devoted himself to welding the lads about him into a brotherhood whose devotion to "Noren," as the Swami was then called, would be unswerving. He was never tired of foretelling his great fame, nor of pointing out the superiority of his genius. If most men had two, or three, or even ten or twelve gifts, he said, he could only say of Noren that his numbered a thousand. He was in fact "the thousand-petalled lotus." Even amongst the great, while he would allow that with one might be found some "two of those gifts which are the marks of Shiva," Noren had at least eighteen of such.

He was sensitive to the point of physical pain himself, in his discrimination of hypocrisy, and on one occasion refused to accept a man whose piety of life was regarded by those about him as unimpugnable. The man, he said, with all his decorum, was a whited sepulchre. In spite of constant purification his presence was contamination. while Noren, on the other hand, if he were to eat beef in an English hotel, would nevertheless be holy, so holy that his very touch would convey holiness to others. By such sayings he sought constantly to build up an enduring relation, based firmly on essentials, between those who were to be his supporters, and this disciple who was to lead.

VIVEKANANDA'S PAST

It was his habit, when a new disciple came to him, to examine him mentally and physically in all possible ways. For the human body was to his trained eye, as significant in all its parts, as any model of a machine to a skilled scientific observer. These examinations moreover would include the throwing of the new-comer into a sleep, in which he had access to the subconscious mind. The privileged, as I have been told, were permitted in this condition to relate their own story ; while from the less honoured

it was evoked by means of questions. It was after such an examination of "Noren" that the Master told all about him, that when the day should come for this boy to realize who and what he was, he would refuse for a moment longer to endure the bondage of bodily existence, going out from life, with its limitations. And by this was always understood by the disciples, the remembering by the lad of what he had already attained even in this world, in lives anterior to his present consciousness. No menial service to himself was permitted by Sri Ramakrishna from this particular follower. Fanning, the preparation of tobacco, and the thousand and one little attentions commonly rendered to the Guru, all these had to be offered to the Master by others.

THE ROARING FIRE

Amongst the many quaint-seeming customs of the East, none is more deep-rooted than the prejudice against eating food cooked by one who is not respected. And on this point the Swami's Master was as sensitive as a woman. But what he would not eat himself he would give freely to his favourite disciple, for Noren, he said, was the "roaring fire," burning up all impurity. The core of divinity again, in this boy's nature was masculine in its quality, as compared to his own merely feminine. Thus, by an attitude of admiration, not unmixed with actual reverence, he created a belief in the destiny of this particular lad, which, when he himself had passed away, was to stand him in good stead, in furnishing authenticity and support to his work. For the Swami was nothing, if not a breaker of bondage. And it was essential that there should be those about him who understood the polar difference between his breaches of custom and those of the idly self-indulgent. Nothing in the early days of my life in India, struck me so forcibly or so repeatedly as the steadiness with which the other memebers of the Order fulfilled this part of the

mission laid upon them. Men whose own lives were cast in the strictest mould of Hindu orthodoxy, or even of asceticism, were willing to eat with the Europeans whom their leader had accepted. Was the Swami seen dining in Madras with an Englishman and his wife? Was it said that while in the West he had touched beef or wine? Not a quiver was seen on the faces of his brethren. It was not for them to question, not for them to explain, not even for them to ask for final justification and excuse. Whatever he did, wherever he might lead, it was their place to be found unflinching at his side. And surely none can pass this spectacle in review, without its being borne in upon him, that meaningless as would have been the Order of Ramakrishna without Vivekananda, even so futile would have been the life and labours of Vivekananda, without, behind him, his brothers of the Order of Ramakrishna. It was said to me lately by one of the older generation that "Ramakrishna had lived for the making of Vivekananda." Is it indeed so? Or is it not rather impossible to distinguish with such fixity between one part and another, in a single mighty utterance of the Divine Mother-heart? Often it appears to me, in studying all these lives, that there has been with us a soul named Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, and that. in the penumbra of his being, appear many forms, some of which are with us still, and of none of whom it could be said with entire truth that here ends, in relation to him. the sphere of those others, or that there begins his own.

V

WANDERINGS IN NORTHERN INDIA

The summer of 1898 stands out in my memory as a series of pictures, painted like old altar-pieces against a golden background of religious ardour and simplicity, and all alike glorified by the presence of one who, to us in his immediate circle, formed their central point. We were a party of four Western women, one of whom was Mrs. Ole Bull of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and another a member of the higher official world of Anglo-Indian Calcutta. Side by side with us travelled the Swami, surrounded by his brethren (or Gurubhais) and disciples. Once arrived at Almora, he and his party became the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, who were then residing there, and we occupied a bungalow some distance away. Thus pleasantly grouped, it was possible to combine a high degree of freedom and intercourse. But when, after a month or so, we left Almora for Kashmir, the Swami went with us, as the guest of Mrs. Ole Bull and left behind him all his attendants.

THE PEASANTS WELCOME

What scenes were those through which we journeyed from the beginning of May until the end of October! And with what passionate enthusiasm were we introduced one by one to each point of interest as we reached it! The ignorance of educated Western people about India,— excepting of course those who have in some measure specialised on the subject—might almost be described as illiteracy, and our object-lessons began, I have no doubt, with Patna, the ancient Pataliputra, itself. The river-front of Benares, as one approaches it by railway from the East, is amongst the sights of the world, and could not fail of our leader's

eager praise. The industries and luxuries of Lucknow must needs be dwelt upon and enumerated. But it was not only the great cities of admitted beauty and historic importance, that the Swami, in his eagerness, would strive to impress on our memory. Perhaps nowhere did his love seem more ardent, or his absorption more intense, than as we passed across the long stretches of the Plains covered with fields and farms and villages. Here his thought was free to brood over the land as a whole, and he would spend hours explaining the communal system of agriculture, or describing the daily life of the farm housewife, with such details as that of the *pot-âu-feu* of mixed grains left boiling all night, for the morning porridge. It was the memory, doubtless, of his own days as a wanderer, that so brightened his eyes and thrilled in his voice, as he told us these things. For I have heard it said by Sadhus that there is no hospitality in India like that of the humble peasant home. True, the mistress has no better bedding to offer than straw, no better shelter than an outhouse built of mud. But it is she who steals in at the last moment, before she goes to rest herself amongst her sleeping household, to place a tooth-brush twig and a bowl of milk where the guest will find them, on waking in the morning, that he may go forth from beneath her roof comforted and refreshed.

It would seem sometimes as if the Swami lived and moved and had his very being in the sense of his country's past. His historic consciousness was extraordinarily developed. Thus, as we journeyed across the Terai, in the hot hours of an afternoon near the beginning of the rains, we were made to feel that this was the very earth on which had passed the youth and renunciation of Buddha. The wild peacocks spoke to us of Rajputana and her ballad lore. An occasional elephant was the text for tales of ancient battles, and the story of an India that was never defeated, so long as she could oppose to the tide of conquest the military walls of these living artillery.

A RIGHTEOUS RULER

As we had crossed the boundary from Bengal into the North-West Provinces, the Swami had stopped to tell us of the wisdom and methods of the great and merciful English ruler who was at that time at the head of their administration. "Unlike others", he said, in words that impressed my memory at the time, "he understands the need of personal government in Oriental countries, where a strong public opinion is not yet developed, so no hospital, no college, no office knows the day when he will pay it a visit of inspection. And even the poorest believes that if only he can reach him personally, he will receive justice at his hands." This idea of the importance of personality in Eastern governments often came uppermost in his talk. He constantly spoke of a democracy as theoretically the worst form for an imperial government to take. And one of his favourite speculations was that it had been a perception of this truth that had urged Julius Cæsar on, to aspire to the imperial authority. We realised sometimes, as we listened to him, how hard it had been for the Indian poor, to understand the transition from the personal rule of sovereigns, always accessible to appeal, always open to the impulse of mercy, and able to exercise a supreme discretion, to the cold bureaucratic methods of a series of departments. For we heard from him the personal histories of innumerable simple folk, who, in the early years of British rule, had spent their all in the vain hope of reaching the Queen, and gaining her ear, at Windsor. Heart-broken pilgrims for the most part, who died, of want and disillusionment, far from the homes and villages that they would never see again!

LOVE OF THE PUNJAB

It was as we passed into the Punjab, however, that we caught our deepest glimpse of the Master's love of his own land. Any one who had seen him here, would have sup-

posed him to have been born in the province, so intensely had he indentified himself with it. It would seem that he had been deeply bound to the people there by many ties of love and reverence ; had received much and given much ; for there were some amongst them who urged that they found in him a rare mixture of 'Guru Nanak and Guru Govind,' their first teacher and their last. Even the most suspicious amongst them trusted him. And if they refused to credit his judgement, or endorse his outflowing sympathy in regard to those Europeans whom he had made his own, he, it may have been, loved the wayward hearts all the more for their inflexible condemnation and incorruptible sternness. His American disciples were already familiar with his picture—that called to his own face a dreamy delight,—of the Punjabi maiden at her spinning-wheel, listening to its "Shivoham! Shivoham! I am He! I am He!" Yet at the same time, I must not forget to tell that it was here, on entering the Punjab, even as, near the end of his life, he is said to have done again at Benares, that he called to him a Mussalman vendor of sweetmeats, and bought and ate from his hand Mohammedan food.

As we went through some village, he would point out to us those strings of marigolds above the door, that distinguished the Hindu homes. Again he would show us the pure golden tint of skin, so different from the pink and white of the European ideal, that constitutes the 'fairness' admired by the Indian races. Or as one drove beside him in a tonga, he would forget all, in that tale of which he never wearied, of Shiva, the Great God, silent, remote upon the mountains, asking nothing of men but solitude, and 'lost in one eternal meditation.'

We drove from Rawalpindi to Murree, where we spent a few days. And then, partly by tonga, partly by boat. we proceeded to Srinagar in Kashmir, and made it our centre and headquarters, during the wanderings of following months.

BEAUTY OF KASHMIR

It would be easy to lose oneself here in the beauty of our journeys, in descriptions of mountain-forests on the road to Almora, or of cathedral-rocks and corn-embosomed villages in the Jhelum Pass. For, as one returns upon that time, its record is found in a constant succession of scenes of loveliness. Not least of these pictures is the memory of the handsome old woman, wearing the crimson coronet and white veil of Kashmiri peasants, who sat at her spinning-wheel under a great Chenaar-tree* in a farmyard, surrounded by her daughters-in-law, when we passed that way, and stopped to visit her. It was the Swami's second call on her. He had received some small kindness at her hands the year before, and had never tired of telling how after this, when he had asked, before saying farewell. "—And, mother, of what religion are you?" her whole face had lighted up with pride and joy, and her old voice had rung out in triumph as she answered loudly and clearly, "I thank our God, by the mercy of the Lord, I am a Mussalman!"

Or I might tell of the avenue of lofty Lombardy poplars outside Srinagar, so like the well-known picture by Hobbema, where we listened to discourse after discourse on India and the Faith.

APPLE-TREES AND IRISES

Or I might linger over the harvest merriment of the villagers playing in reaped fields on moonlit evenings; or talk of the red bronze of amaranth crops, or the green of young rice under tall poplars at Islamabad. Forget-me-nots of a brilliant blue form the commonest wild flower of the Kashmiri fields in summer; but in autumn and spring, fields and river banks are violet-tinged with small purple irises, and one walks amongst their spear-like leaves as if they were grass. How infinitely tender are the suggestions of those little iris-covered hillocks, rounding off the rise of

* The Chenaar-tree is the Oriental Palm.

some roadside against the sky, that mark the burial places of the Mussalman dead!

Here and there, too, amidst grass and irises, one comes on groups of gnarled apple-trees, or pear, or plum, the remains of the village orchards which the State, once upon a time, supplied to all its subjects free of cost. Walking here once at twilight along the high banks of the river, I watched a party of Mussulman herdsmen, crooks in hand, driving a small flock of long-haired goats before them to their village. And then, as they came to a knot of apple-trees, they stopped awhile, and spreading a blanket for praying-carpet, they proceeded to offer their evening-worship in the deepening dusk. Verily, says my heart, there is no end of beauty, there is no end.

THE MODERN DESPAIR

But in good sooth it is not of these things that I am attempting, in the course of the present pages, to speak. Mine is the broken and faltering witness of one who is fain to tell—not of geography nor of politics, nor yet of the ways and customs of interesting peoples and unknown races, but rather of the glimpses vouchsafed to her of a great religious life of the ancient order, living itself out, amidst the full and torturing consciousness of all the anomalies and perplexities of the Modern Transition. Sri Ramakrishna had been, as the Swami himself said once of him, "like a flower," living apart in the garden of a temple, simple, half-naked, orthodox, the ideal of the old time in India, suddenly burst into bloom, in a world that had thought to dismiss its very memory. It was at once the greatness and the tragedy of my own Master's life that he was not of this type. His was the modern mind in its completeness. In his consciousness, the ancient light of the mood in which man comes face to face with God might shine, but it shone on all those questions and all those puzzles which are present to the thinkers and workers of the modern world. His hope could not pass by unheeded,—it might include or it might reject—

the hope of men of the nineteenth century. That sudden revelation of the misery and struggle of humanity as a whole, which has been the first result of the limelight irradiation of facts by the organisation of knowledge, had been made to him also, as to the European mind. We know the verdict that Europe has passed on it all. Our art, our science, our poetry, for the last sixty years or more, are filled with the voices of our despair. A world summed up in the growing satisfaction and vulgarity of privilege, and the growing sadness and pain of the dispossessed; and a will of man too noble and high to condone the evil, yet too feeble to avert or arrest it, this is the spectacle of which our greatest minds are aware. Reluctant, wringing her hands, it is true, yet seeing no other way, the culture of the West can but stand and cry, "'To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' *Vae Victis*! Woe to the vanquished!"

THE ANSWER OF THE EAST

Is this also the verdict of the Eastern wisdom? If so, what hope is there for humanity? I find in my Master's life an answer to this question. I see in him the heir to the spiritual discoveries and religious struggles of innumerable teachers and saints in the past of India and the world, and at the same time the pioneer and prophet of a new and future order of development. In the place which a problem took in his mind I find evidence regarding its final solution which—short of my own definite arrival at an opposite conclusion, as he himself would have been the first to point out—is of the highest value to myself. And thinking thus, I believe that each trace of those higher and uncommon modes of thought and consciousness to which he held the key, has its significance for the modern age. I believe that much which has passed myself by, uncomprehending, will fall on its proper soil in other lives. And I pray only to give always true witness, without added interpolation or falsifying colour.

VI

THE AWAKENER OF SOULS

I had heard of "the spiritual life" in Calcutta, as of a thing definite and accessible, to be chosen deliberately, and attained by following certain well-known paths. I found it, on reaching the mountains, to have its roots deep in a yearning love of God, in an anguished pursuit of the Infinite, of which I cannot hope to give any description. For this was characteristic of our Master. Where others would talk of ways and means, he knew how to light a fire. Where others gave directions, he would show the thing itself.

I wish here to be exceedingly explicit. My own part, throughout the years of my discipleship, appears to me to have been something like that of a thought-reader. The only claim that I can make is that I was able to enter sufficiently into the circuit of my Master's energy to be able to give evidence regarding it from direct perception. And since I believe that such an experience is subject to laws as definite as those of any physical force, I must endeavour to describe accurately the conditions under which this happened to me.

PERSONAL RESERVE

The Swami himself was, on personal subjects, intensely reserved. He had received confessions, of course, in many parts of the world, yet no one ever lived who more anxiously sought to escape the office of spiritual director. A hot flush and an accession of delicate *hauteur* were his immediate response, even to such merely theoretical questions as appeared to him to demand too intimate a revelation of the personal experience. I have sometimes heard enquiries forced upon him in his London classes—as to such matters

as the feeling which accompanies Samadhi, for instance,—when it was clear to all listeners that he would rather have endured a careless touch upon an exposed nerve.

He had himself suggested my joining his travelling party, for the purpose of receiving his personal training for the work he wished me to do in India. But the method of this training proved entirely general. We would sit all together in garden or verandah, and listen, all together, to the discourse of the hour, each appropriating as much as she chose, and studying afterwards as she liked.

In all that year of 1898 I can remember only one occasion when the Swami invited me to walk alone with him for half an hour, and then our conversation—for it was towards the end of the summer, when I had begun to understand my own position a little—was rather of the policy and aims of the future, than of anything more subjective.

THE DRAMA OF THOUGHT

Undoubtedly, in the circle that gathers round a distinguished thinker, there are hidden emotional relationships which form the channels, as it were, along which his ideas circulate and are received. Even a mathematician will succeed in impressing himself on his generation, only in proportion to the radiance of feeling on which his thought is carried. But these expressions are wholly impersonal, and are appreciated by different receivers in very different ways. One holds himself as servant; another, as brother, friend, or comrade: a third may even regard the master-personality as that of a beloved child. These things have been made into a perfect science in India, and it is there boldly understood and accepted that without some such dramatisation of their own relation to it, ordinary minds cannot be made susceptible of a great religious impulse. In my own case the position ultimately taken proved that most happy one of a spiritual daughter, and as such I was regarded by all the Indian people and communities, whom I met during my Master's life.

But at the beginning of these journeys, before this and other things became clear to me, my mind was wholly in bewilderment, and it was my great good fortune that I was given at this time, as my daily teacher in Bengali and in Hindu religious literature, the young monk known as the Swami Swarupananda. For I have always thought that it was to the fact that I found myself on the line of communication between his mind and that of our Master,—as on the pathway of interaction between some major and minor heliograph,—that I owed my ability thereafter to read and understand a little of those feelings and ideas with which the air about us was charged.

THE SWAMI SWARUPANANDA

The Swami Swarupananda had been received at the Monastery within a few days of my own admission, in the chapel there, to the vows of a novice. But he, after some few weeks of probation, had received the yellow cloth, and taken the rank of a Sannyasin, at the hands of the Swami. The story of his mental development was of extraordinary interest to me. For this man had been brought up in his childhood in the Vaishnava faith, that is to say, in an idea of God as the kind and loving Lord and Preserver of men, and of Krishna as the Saviour and Divine Incarnation, which is practically tantamount to the Christianity of the West. The usual revulsion, familiar to all of us, had been encountered. In the early and most chivalrous years of manhood he had witnessed a few instances of the injustice of life, had seen bitter proof that the battle in this world was to the strong, and found himself unable to believe longer in the sweet myth of his childhood, of an all-kind Providence. One of these stories I remember. Passing through a crowded street one day, he found a poor woman kneeling and crying softly, as, grain by grain, she picked up from the dust a handful of rice, that had been jostled out of the bowl in her hand, by a passer-by. And then the man found

himself in his passionate pity, crying indignantly, "What the Devil would God be doing, if He existed, to let such things happen?"

THE DREAM OF DUALITY

Two or three such experiences precipitated him upon a year of mental suffering so keen that he never again knew perfect health. But he emerged from it in the peace that comes of a settled attitude towards life. *He would break the dream.* In other words, he had reached the conclusion that thousands of Indian students have arrived at, both before and since the time of Buddha. It was henceforth impossible to him to imagine that the solution of the problem might ultimately be found in any picture of God seated on a throne, and the soul of man, in any attitude or relation, kneeling before Him. Rather, he saw in the ignorance and selfishness of the mind itself, the source of all such dreams as this, and of those further dreams, of pain and pleasure, of justice and injustice, of which the world, as we know it, is made up. And he determined to conquer this illusion, to reach the point of utmost insight and certainty, to gain deliverance from the perception of opposites, and to attain to that permanent realisation of One-ness which is known, in the Hindu conception of life, as Mukti.

From this time on, his schooling of himself to reach the highest would appear to have become a passion. One came to understand, in many ways, that the remaining years of his life in his father's house had been almost more severe than those spent in most monasteries. And I, reading the Bhagavad Gita under his guidance, long afterwards at Almora, was made able to conceive of what we call the love of God as a burning thirst.

Under the influence of the Swami Swarupananda, I began seriously the attempt at meditation. And if it had not been for this help of his, one of the greatest hours of

my life would have passed me by. My relation to our Master at this time can only be described as one of clash and conflict. I can see now how much there was to learn, and how short was the time for learning to be, and the first of lessons doubtless is the destroying of self-sufficiency in the mind of the taught. But I had been little prepared for that constant rebuke and attack upon all my most cherished prepossessions which was now my lot. Suffering is often illogical, and I cannot attempt to justify by reason the degree of unhappiness which I experienced at this time, as I saw the dream of a friendly and beloved leader falling away from me, and the picture of one who would be at least indifferent, and possibly, silently hostile, substituting itself instead.

THE BIRTH OF PEACE

Fortunately it never occurred to me to retract my own proffered service, but I was made to realise, as the days went by, that in this there would be no personal sweetness. And then a time came when one of the older ladies of our party, thinking perhaps that such intensity of pain inflicted might easily go too far, interceded kindly and gravely with the Swami. He listened silently and went away. At evening, however, he returned, and finding us together in the verandah, he turned to her and said, with the simplicity of a child, "You were right. There must be a change. I am going away into the forests to be alone, and when I come back I shall bring peace." Then he turned and saw that above us the moon was new, and a sudden exaltation came into his voice as he said, "See! the Mohammedans think much of the new moon. Let us also with the new moon begin a new life!" As the words ended, he lifted his hands and blessed, with silent depths of blessing, his most rebellious disciple, by this time kneeling before him. . . . It was assuredly a moment of wonderful sweetness of reconciliation. But such a moment may heal a wound. It can-

not restore an illusion that has been broken into fragments. And I have told its story, only that I may touch upon its sequel. Long, long ago, Sri Ramakrishna had told his disciples that the day would come when his beloved "Noren" would manifest his own great gift of bestowing knowledge with a touch. That evening at Almora, I proved the truth of his prophecy. For alone, in meditation, I found myself gazing deep into an Infinite Good, to the recognition of which no egoistic reasoning had led me. I learnt, too, on the physical plane, the simple everyday reality of the experience related in the Hindu books on religious psychology. And I understood, for the first time, that the greatest teachers may destroy in us a personal relation only in order to bestow the Impersonal Vision in its place.

VII

FLASHES FROM THE BEACON-FIRE

This was not perhaps the only experience of its kind, but it was certainly the only one to which I need refer in detail; and the whole incident of which it formed a part gave me the clue to the attitude which the Eastern teacher demands of a disciple. Before all things this attitude must be one of passivity. I have also heard it urged, that it must be one of personal service. Under these conditions, it is said, the thoughts of the master become as seeds, and germinate in the mind of the pupil. I cannot tell. My own offerings in this kind were limited to very brief and very occasional requisitions of the needle or the pen. A daughter must not at any time act, said the Swami, as if in her father's house were too few servants! Yet I do believe—for in some cases I have known its truth—that by the loving performance of humble offices for those above us, we may enter into spiritual and intellectual communion with them, which may bear strange and beautiful fruit in our own lives.

THE WORSHIP OF THE GURU

The feeling which people of certain schools in the West devote to the Church, that mixture of perfect faith and adoring love, the Eastern disciple is called upon to render to his Guru, or spiritual master. It is he and his achievement, which are the power behind his follower. And the unpardonable sacrilege is a failure to acknowledge, or a repudiation of, this debt. Each will express his devotion in his own way. Greatest of all Gurus is he who realises most deeply the freedom of the disciple. But devotion to the uttermost there must be. And dry-rot, it is believed, invades that spiritual life which seeks to base its message on itself.

HINDU VIRTUES

We had at this time, it will be remembered, become part of a society in which solitude was regarded as the greatest medium of self-development. Nothing, said the Swami, better illustrated to his own mind, the difference between Eastern and Western methods of thought, than the European idea that a man could not live alone for twenty years, and remain quite sane, taken side by side with the Indian notion that till a man had been alone for twenty years, he could not be regarded as perfectly himself. And the contrast, though necessarily expressed with some exaggeration, is nevertheless essentially correct. To Hindu thinking it is only in silence and alone-ness that we can drink so deep of the Impersonal Self that all the facets and angles of our personal littleness are rounded out, as by growth from within. Thus, the faces of the Buddhas, in the hour of Nirvana, are always *calm*. The world, in all its aspects and relations, is but a childish interruption of the flow of thought. Behind everything is felt to be that unutterable fullness, of which the thing seen is so paltry and distorted an expression. Human relations are too poor to tempt those who have bathed in the wellspring of all such relations at the Ultimate Source. And this Ultimate Source is not thought of here, it must be remembered, as love or compassion or heroism, though all these may be roads by which to reach it, but as the perception of Oneness, and that alone. I have always thought that this is the reason why steadiness and quiet and self-effacement are virtues so much more central, in the Hindu conception, than the more active and aggressive characteristics prized in the West. Every respect in which we, being persons, can yet be consistently indifferent to our own personality, is so much gained.

Under the domination of these ideas, then, it appeared self-evident to all of us, in that wonderful summer of 1898, that far beyond any of the Saviours-made-visible, were

those greater souls who had entered into the Impersonal and the Unmanifested, never to return. "It is a sin even to *think* of the body," the Swami would say, now and again ; or, "It is wrong to *manifest* power!" And even in the compassion of a Buddha there was memory of persons! Even in the purity of Jesus there was manifestation!

This last thought seems to form a common motive with Indian Sadhus, for on one occasion when our tents had been pitched indiscreetly near a pilgrims' camp, and the Swami was half-minded to insist, against hundreds of obstreperous complainants, on leaving them where they were, a strange monk came up to him, and said in a low voice, "You *have* this power, Swamiji, but you ought not to manifest it!" And he at once had them removed.

CONTEMPT OF THE UNREAL

As to the power of silence and retirement to make illumination visible, we had many opportunities of judging. For over and over again the Swami would break away, to return unexpectedly. It sometimes seemed as if life in society were an agony to him. He grew nervous under the gaze of numbers of admirers who had heard of his great fame, and would enter his boat and sit watching him, leaving him no privacy. The life of the silent ashen-clad wanderer, or the hidden hermit, he thought of, it would now and then seem, as the lover might think of the beloved. At no time would it have surprised us, had some one told us that today or tomorrow he would be gone for ever ; that we were now listening to his voice for the last time. He, and necessarily we, in all that depended on him, were as straws carried on the Ganges of the Eternal Will. At any moment It might reveal Itself to him as silence. At any moment, life in the world might end for him.

This plan-less-ness was not an accident. Never can I forget the disgust with which he turned on myself once, a couple of years later, when I had offered him some piece

of worldly wisdom regarding his own answer to a letter which he had brought for me to see. "Plans! Plans!" he exclaimed in indignation. "That is why you Western people can never create a religion! If any of you ever did, it was only a few Catholic saints, who had no plans. Religion was never never preached by planners!"

As it was, in the course of that pleasant summer-journey, we were always liable to hear from the servants that the Swami's boat had left its moorings an hour ago, and would not return today. He might be away, in fact, either one or many days. We never knew. But always he returned from these lonely retreats with shining of radiance and peace, and ever-deepening utterance of knowledge. To all the disciples of Ramakrishna, religious customs consecrated by the faith of others, have great significance. One of them speaks of the Scala Santa in Rome as moving him deeply. The ideal of the Order moreover, is to participate in the worship of the accustomed devotees in every detail. Thus I have seen my own Master, when visiting holy places, make the same offerings of milk and rice, or tell his beads in the same manner, as the humblest of the women about him. The minutest rules of conduct, both secular and religious, would be scrupulously observed by him on these occasions. Thus he one-d himself with the people, before rising to his own greatest heights.

HOLY PLACES

Two places in Kashmir are regarded as extremely sacred, one is Kshir Bhowani, a spring at which the Divine Motherhood is worshipped, and the other Amarnath, a mountain-cave in which there is an ice-emblem of Shiva. And the most notable events of our summer were his pilgrimages to these two shrines. But we also were ambitious. We desired to be taught to meditate, in systematic fashion, and begged to be allowed to make a retreat in some lonely place, where we might keep hours of silence,

and make our attempts under definite direction. For this reason, tents were brought, and we camped for a week on the edge of a forest, at a place called Achhabal, in the beginning of September. The pilgrimage to Amarnath had been made at the beginning of August, and the Swami left us for Kshir Bhowani on the thirtieth of September. Finally we parted from him, and our journey was over, at Baramulla, October the twelfth.

Even apart from the greater revelations and experiences, flashes from the beacon-fire of that life in whose shadow we dwelt, fell constantly upon us. Once he had just returned from an absence, and as he sat talking of Bhakti, a servant came to say his meal was ready. But we could see how intolerable was the thought of food, to one who was still living on the heights of the love of God. Again it was evening, and we women-folk were seated in the boat of *Sthir Mata,* as we called our hostess, chatting in low tones, in the falling dusk, when suddenly he came in to spend a few minutes with us. The talk turned on the approaching departure for Europe ; but it soon ended ; and then one who expected to be left alone in India, spoke of how the others would be missed. The Swami turned on her with a wonderful gentleness. "But why so serious about it?" he said. "Why not touch hands and part with a smile? You are so morbid, you Westerns! You worship sorrow! All through your country I found that. Social life in the West is like a peal of laughter, but underneath, it is a wail. It ends in a sob. The fun and frivolity are all on the surface: really, it is full of tragic intensity. Now here, it is sad and gloomy on the outside, but underneath are carelessness and merriment.

THE COSMOS AS PLAY

"You know, we have a theory that the Universe is God's manifestation of Himself, just for fun, that the Incarnations came and lived here, 'just for fun.' Play, it was all

play. Why was Christ crucified? It was mere play. And so of life. Just play with the Lord. Say, 'It is all play. It is all play.' Do you do anything?" And then, without another word, he turned and went out into the starlight, and passed into his own boat. And we also, in the hush of the river, said goodnight and parted.

One evening, in our week of retreat, we sat under the great trees beside the stream, and it was of leadership that he talked. He began by comparing certain notable movements of the hour, of which one had grown daily during the lifetime of its founder, both in numbers and complexity, while the other had been seen breaking up into its component parts. Finally he said "I am persuaded, that a leader is not made in one life. He has to be born for it. For the difficulty is not in organisation, and making plans; the test, the real test, of a leader, lies in holding widely different people together, along the line of their common sympathies. And this can only be done unconsciously, never by trying."

From this, the talk somehow strayed to Plato, and some one asked for an explanation of the doctrine of Ideas. He gave this, and as he ended, he said, addressing one of the group in particular, "And so you see, all this is but a feeble manifestation of the great ideas which alone are real and perfect. Somewhere is an ideal you, and here is an attempt to manifest it! The attempt falls short still in many ways. Still,—go on! You will interpret the ideal some day."

LIFE AND THE IDEA

"I cannot feel the longing to get out of life that Hindus feel," said one on another occasion, in response to something he had said about breaking the bonds of life. "I think I would a great deal rather come back and help the causes that interest me, than achieve personal salvation." "That's because you cannot overcome the idea of progress," he

retorted quickly. "But things do not grow better. They remain as they were, and *we* grow better, by the changes we make in them."

This last sentence has to myself the ring of a Veda. "We grow better, by the changes we make in them." Similarly, when we were at Almora, I remember a certain elderly man with a face full of amiable weakness, who came to put to him a question about Karma. What were they to do, he asked, whose Karma it was, to see the strong oppress the weak? The Swami turned on him in surprised indignation. "Why thrash the strong, of course!" he said. "You forget your own part in this Karma.—Yours is always the right to rebel!"

VIII

AMARNATH

It was in the course of an open-air meal in the Mogul Gardens at Achhabal, that the Swami suddenly announced that he would go to Amarnath with the pilgrims, and take his daughter with him. Within our little party, there was too much feeling of delighted congratulation, for any obstacle to be put in the way of the fortunate member. And aided thus, as well as by the State officer, in charge of the journey, preparations went forward for this unique experience.

Kashmir seemed, in those weeks, to be full of pilgrims. We left Achhabal, and returned to our boats at Islamabad, for final arrangements, and everywhere we saw the march of gathering hosts. It was all very quiet and orderly and picturesque. Two or three thousand people would encamp in a field, and leave it before dawn, with no trace of their occupation, save the ashes of their cooking-fires. They carried a bazaar with them, and at each halting place, the pitching of tents, and opening of shops, took place with incredible rapidity. Organisation appeared to be instinctive. A broad street would run through the middle of one part of the camp, and here one could buy dried fruits, milk, dahls, and rice. The tent of the Tehsildar,—with that of the Swami on one side, and my own on the other,—was generally placed near some advantageous spot for the lighting of the evening fire, and thus his neighbourhood tended to form a social centre.

THE TALK OF SADHUS

There were hundreds of monks, of all the orders, with their Gerrua tents, some no larger than good-sized umbrella, and amongst these, the Swami's influence appeared to be

magnetic. The more learned of them swarmed about him at every halting place, filling his tent, and remaining absorbed in conversation, throughout the hours of daylight. The talk on their side, he told us afterwards, had been all of Shiva, and they had remonstrated with him seriously, when he had insisted, occasionally, on drawing their attention to the world about them. Even foreigners, they urged, were men. Why make such distinctions between *Swadesh* and *bidesh*? Nor could many of them understand the warmth of his love and sympathy for Mohammedanism. This same other-worldliness that made *Swadesh* and *bidesh* indistinguishable, also prevented these simple souls from formally conceiving of a unity, in which Hindu and Mohammedan were but rival elements. The soil of the Punjab, they argued, was drenched with the blood of those who had died for the faith. Here, at least, let him practise a narrow orthodoxy! In answer to this, as became one who was, in fact 'an anachronism of the future,' the Swami made those practical concessions of the moment that were expressive of his love for the brethren, and drove his principles home to their minds with the greater force and vehemence. But, as he told the tale of his warm discussions, the foreign mind could not help, with some amusement, noting the paradox that the Tehsildar himself, and many officers and servants of the pilgrimage, had been Mussulmans, and that no one had dreamt of objecting to their entering the Cave with the Hindu worshippers, on the ultimate arrival at the shrine. The Tehsildar came afterwards, indeed, with a group of friends, begging formal acceptance by the Swami as disciples; and in this, no one seemed to find anything incongruous or surprising.

Leaving Islamabad, we caught up somewhere with the pilgrimage, and camped with it, for that night, at Pawan, a place famous for its holy springs. I can remember yet the brilliance of the lights reflected in the clear black waters of the tank that evening, and throngs of pilgrims proceeding in little groups from shrine to shrine.

MOUNTAIN-VILLAGES

At Pahlgam—the village of the shepherds—the camp halted for a day, to keep Ekadashi. It was a beautiful little ravine floored, for the most part with sandy islands in the pebble-worn bed of a mountain stream. The slopes about it were dark with pine-trees, and over the mountain at its head was seen, at sunset, the moon, not yet full. It was the scenery of Switzerland or Norway, at their gentlest and loveliest. Here we saw the last of human dwellings, a bridge, a farm-house, with its ploughed fields, and a few saetter-huts. And here, on a grassy knoll, when the final march began, we left the rest of our party encamped.

Through scenes of indescribable beauty, three thousand of us ascended the valleys that opened before us as we went. The first day we camped in a pine-wood; the next, we had passed the snow-line, and pitched our tents beside a frozen river. That night, the great camp-fire was made of juniper, and the next evening, at still greater heights, the servants had to wander many miles, in search of this scanty fuel. At last the regular pathway came to an end, and we had to scramble up and down, along goat-paths, on the face of steep declivities, till we reached the boulder-strewn gorge, in which the Cave of Amarnath was situated. As we ascended this, we had before us the snow-peaks covered with a white veil, newly-fallen; and in the Cave itself, in a niche never reached by sunlight, shone the great ice-Lingam, that must have seemed, to the awestruck peasants who first came upon it, like the waiting Presence of God.

THE SHRINE

The Swami had observed every rite of the pilgrimage, as he came along. He had told his beads, kept fasts, and bathed in the ice-cold waters of five streams in succession, crossing the river-gravels on our second day. And now, as he entered the Cave, it seemed to him, as if he saw Shiva

made visible before him. Amidst the buzzing, swarming noise of the pilgrim-crowd, and the overhead fluttering of the pigeons, he knelt and prostrated two or three times, unnoticed; and then, afraid lest emotion might overcome him, he rose and silently withdrew. He said afterwards that in these brief moments he had received from Shiva the gift of Amar,—not to die, until he himself had willed it. In this way, possibly, was defeated or fulfilled that pre-sentiment which had haunted him from childhood, that he would meet with death, in a Shiva temple amongst the mountains.

Outside the Cave, there was no Brahminic exploitation of the helpless people. Amarnath is remarkable for its simplicity and closeness to nature. But the pilgrimage culminates on the great day of Rakhibandhan, and our wrists were tied with the red and yellow threads of that sacrament. Afterwards, we rested and had a meal, on some high boulders beside the stream, before returning to our tents.

The Swami was full of the place. He felt that he had never been to anything so beautiful. He sat long silent. Then he said dreamily, "I can well imagine how this Cave was first discovered. A party of shepherds, one summer day, must have lost their flocks, and wandered in here in search of them. Then, when they came home to the valleys, they told how they had suddenly come upon Mahadev!"

Of my Master himself, in any case, a like story was true. The purity and whiteness of the ice-pillar had startled and enwrapt him. The cavern had revealed itself to him as the secret of Kailas. And for the rest of his life, he cherished the memory of how he had entered a mountain-cave, and come face to face there with the Lord Himself.

IX

KSHIR BHOWANI

Everything in our life up to the time of the pilgrimage to Amarnath had been associated with the thought of Shiva. Each step had seemed to draw us closer to the great snow-mountains that were at once His image and His home. The young moon resting at nightfall above the glacier-cleft and the tossing pines, had suggested irresistibly the brow of the Great God. Above all, that world of meditation on whose outskirts we dwelt, had Him as its heart and centre, rapt and silent, "above all qualities and beyond the reach of thought." Undoubtedly this Hindu idea of Shiva is the highest conception of God as approached by the spiritual intuition of man. He is the Divine accessible *within*, and purified of all externals.

It may possibly be, that in the pursuit of uttermost knowledge, this personification of the unmanifesting, is necessarily succeeded by the opposite conception of God—as the power behind all manifestation. It is clear at least that he who has sounded the depths of both these, will be capable of understanding the significance of every possible human symbol of the divine, since all must be included in one or other of the two. If the Supreme is thought of by man at all, it must be either as Infinite Being or as Infinite Power. Whether there is any such law of nature behind the fact or not, must remain a speculation. In some imperceptible way, at all events, the Swami's attention appeared to shift, during the month of August, from Shiva to the Mother. He was always singing the songs of Ram Prasad, as if he would saturate his own mind with the conception of himself as a child. He told some of us once, that wherever he turned he was conscious of the presence of the Mother, as if She were a person in the room.

It was always his habit to speak simply and naturally of "Mother," and some of the older members of the party caught this, so that such phrases as "Well, well! Mother knows best!" were a constant mode of thought and speech amongst us, when, for instance, some cherished intention had to be abandoned.

THE PAIRS OF OPPOSITES

Gradually, however, his absorption became more intense. He complained bitterly of the malady of thought, which would consume a man, leaving him no time for sleep or rest, and would often become as insistent as a human voice. He had constantly striven to make clear to us the ideal of rising beyond the pairs of opposites, beyond pain and pleasure, good and evil alike,—that conception which forms the Hindu solution of the problem of sin,—but now he seemed to fasten his whole attention on the dark, the painful, and the inscrutable, in the world, with the determination to reach by this particular road the One Behind Phenomena. Baffled as he found himself in the object of his visit to Kashmir,* "the worship of the Terrible" now became his whole cry. Illness or pain would always draw forth the reminder that "She is the organ. She is the pain. And She is the Giver of pain, Kali! Kali! Kali!"

KALI THE MOTHER

His brain was teeming with thoughts, he said one day, and his fingers would not rest till they were written down. It was that same evening that we came back to our house-boat from some expedition, and found waiting for us, where he had called and left them, his manuscript lines on "Kali

*He had come, at the express invitation of the Maharajah, to choose a piece of land, for the establishment of a math and Sanskrit college. But his choice was twice vetoed, on the list of agenda for Council by Sir Adalbert Talbot, then acting as Resident. Thus it could not even be discussed.

the Mother." Writing in a fever of inspiration, he had fallen on the floor, when he had finished—as we learnt afterwards,—exhausted with his own intensity.

KALI THE MOTHER

The stars are blotted out,
The clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness vibrant, sonant,
In the roaring, whirling wind,
Are the souls of a million lunatics,
Just loosed from the prison house,
Wrenching trees by the roots
Sweeping all from the path.
The sea has joined the fray,
And swirls up mountain-waves,
To reach the pitchy sky—
The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side
A thousand, thousand shades
Of Death begrimed and black—
    Scattering plagues and sorrows,
    Dancing mad with joy,
    Come, Mother, come!
For Terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou Time, the All-Destroyer!
  Come, O Mother, come!
Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
    To him the Mother comes.

About this time, he had taken his boat away from our vicinity, and only a young Brahmo doctor, who was also

living in Kashmir that summer,—and whose kindness and devotion to him were beyond all praise,—was allowed to know where he was, and to enquire about his daily needs. The next evening the doctor went, as usual, but finding him lost in thought, retired without speaking, and the following day, September the thirtieth, he had gone, leaving word that he was not to be followed, to Kshir Bhowani, the coloured springs. He was away, from that day till October the sixth.

* * *

THE RETURN

In the afternoon of that day we saw him coming back to us, up the river. He stood in front of the Dunga, grasping with one hand the bamboo roof-pole, and with the other holding yellow flowers. He entered our houseboat,—a transfigured presence, and silently passed from one to another blessing us, and putting the marigolds on our heads. "I offered them to Mother," he said at last, as he ended by handing the garland to one of us. Then he sat down. "No more 'Hari Om!' It is all 'Mother,' now!" he said with a smile. We all sat silent. Had we tried to speak, we should have failed, so tense was the spot with something that stilled thought. He opened his lips again. "All my patriotism is gone. Everything is gone. Now it's only 'Mother Mother!'"

"I have been very wrong," he said simply, after another pause. "Mother said to me 'What, even if unbelivers should enter My temples, and defile My images! What is that to you? Do you protect Me? Or do I protect you?' So there is no more patriotism. I am only a little child!"

Then he spoke on indifferent matters, about the departure for Calcutta, which he desired to make at once, with a word or two as to the experience of physical ill into which his perplexities of mind had translated themselves,

throughout the past week. "I may not tell you more now; it is not in order," he said gently, adding, before he left us,—"But spiritually, *spiritually*, I was not bound down!"

We saw very little of the Swami, during the next few days. Before breakfast the next morning, indeed, two of us were with him on the river-bank for a moment, when, seeing the barber, he said "All this must go!" and left us, to come out again half-an-hour later, without a hair. Somehow, in ways and words that could scarcely be recounted, came to us now and then a detail of that austerity, by which, in the past week, such illumination had come. We could picture the fasting : the offering of milk and rice and almonds daily, in the spring; and the morning worship of a Brahmin pundit's little daughter, as Uma Kumari—the Divine Virgin ;—the whole meanwhile, in such a passion of self-renunciation, that not one wave of reaction could be found in his consciousness for any injury, however great.

HOUSEHOLDER VERSUS SANNYASIN

A man came one day to ask a question, and the Swami, in monastic dress and with shaven head, happened to enter. "Ought one to seek an opportunity of death, in defence of right, or ought one to take the lesson of the Gita* and learn never to react?" was the problem put to him. "I am for no reaction," said the Swami, speaking slowly, and with a long pause. Then he added "—for Sannyasins. Self-defence for the householder!"

The mood seemed to grow upon him, and deepen. He spoke of this time once, as 'a crisis in his life.' Again, he called himself a child, seated on the lap of the Mother, and being caressed. And the thought came to us, unspoken, that these Her kisses might make themselves known to mind and nerves as anguish, yet be welcomed with

*It is perhaps worth while to say that for my own part I could never understand how this enquirer gathered this particular lesson from the Gita!

rapture of recognition. Did he not say "There could be bliss in torture?"

THE FAREWELL

As soon as it could be arranged, we left for Baramulla, which we reached on Tuesday evening, October the eleventh. It had been settled that he would go on to Lahore the following afternoon, while we waited some days longer. On the way down the river, we saw very little of him. He was almost entirely silent, and took long walks by the riverside alone, rarely even entering our houseboat for a moment. His health had been completely broken, by the labours of his return to India ; and the physical ebb of the great experience through which he had just passed—for even suffering becomes impossible, when a given point of weariness is reached ; and similarly, the body refuses to harbour a certain intensity of the spiritual life for an indefinite period!—was leaving him, doubtless, more exhausted than he himself suspected. All this contributed, one imagines, to a feeling that none of us knew for how long a time we might now be parting, and it was this thought perhaps, that brought him to say good-bye on Wednesday morning, as we finished breakfast, and made him stay to talk.

Hour after hour went by, that morning, and it is easier to tell of the general impression created, than to build it up again detail by detail. We who listened, seemed to be carried into an innermost sanctuary. Sometimes he would sing and translate some snatch or other of devotional poetry, always to the Mother. And it was always Kali, with Her foot on the heart of Her worshipper, Who grew clearer to our minds ; though he dwelt much, and over and over again, on the thought of the Mother, seated in the market-place of this world, playing amongst the players ; flying Her own kite, and in a hundred thousand cutting the string of only one or two.

"Scattering plagues and sorrows," he quoted from his own verses,

"Dancing mad with joy,
Come, Mother, come!
For Terror is Thy name!
Death—is in Thy breath.
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er."

"It all came true, every word of it," he interrupted himself to say.

"Who dares misery love,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
And hug the form of death,—

To *him* the Mother does indeed come. I have proved it. For I have hugged the form of Death!"

ILLUSION

He spoke of the future. There was nothing to be desired, but the life of the wanderer, in silence and nudity, on the banks of the Ganges. He would have nothing. "Swamiji" was dead and gone. Who was he, that he should feel responsible for teaching the world? It was all fuss and vanity. The Mother had no need of him, but only he of Her. Even work, when one had seen this, was nothing but illusion.

There was no way but love. If people sinned against us, we must love them till it was impossible for them to resist it. That was all. Yet, as I write the words, I know well that I can give no idea of the *vastness* of which all this was utterance,—as if no blow, to any in the world, could pass and leave our Master's heart untouched; as if no pain, even to that of death, could elicit anything but love and blessing.

He told us the story of Vashishtha and Vishwamitra ; of Vasihshtha's hundred descendants slain ; and the King left alone, landless and crownless, to live out his life. Then he pictured the hut standing in the moonlight, amongst the trees, and Vashishtha, and his wife within. He is poring intently over some precious page, written by his great rival, when she draws near and hangs over him for a moment, saying, "Look, how bright is the moon tonight!" and he, without looking up,—"But ten thousand times brighter, my love, is the intellect of Vishwamitra!"

All forgotten! the deaths of his hundred children, his own wrongs, and his sufferings, and his heart lost in admiration of the genius of his foe! Such, said the Swami, should be our love also, like that of Vashishtha for Vishwamitra, without the slightest tinge of personal memory.

ALTAR-BLOSSOMS

At this moment, a peasant brought sprays of pear-blossom, and laid them down on the table at which we sat. And one of us lifted them, saying, "Swami! these were made for worship, for they will bear no fruits!" But he looked at her, smiling, and she could not break the spell, to offer them.

And so he went. We all, servants and boat-people, friends and disciples, parents and children, accompanied him to the tonga on the roadside, to say good-bye. One sturdy little figure, the four-year-old daughter of his chief boatman, whose devotion to him we had long noted, trotted determinedly at his side, with a tray of fruit for his journey on her black head, and stood, smiling farewell, as he drove away. And we, not less deeply touched than this little child, but infinitely less unselfish, in our grown-up complexity of thought and emotion, knew not when we should look upon his face again, yet failed not to realise that we had that day lived through hours, within whose radiance all our future would be passed.

X

CALCUTTA AND THE HOLY WOMEN

The Swami had one remarkable characteristic. He made all who were near him appear great. In his presence, one saw and loved, at its highest, their unspoken purpose; and even their faults and failings, if one realised them, would seem to be justified and accounted for. We surely stand at many different grades of perception! Some of us see and recognise only the form and the acts of a man. Others will refer his features to a central type, and note on his external aspects the tide-marks of the will, in all its mixedness and complexity of ebb and flow. But still others are aware of a vast magazine of cause behind, against which a life stands out as a single fragmentary effect. We ourselves cannot gauge the knowledge that prompts our own words and deeds.

Something after this fashion was the vision that grew upon me, of the world into which I had entered, as the Swami's disciple, on my arrival in Calcutta, early in November 1898. During the months between that date and the following July, I saw him always in the midst of his own people, without even the friendly intervention of a European home. I became myself one of the people, living with them in surroundings which his genius had created. And thus enveloped by his interpretation, thus dominated by his passionate love of his own race, it was like walking in some twilight of the gods, where the forms of men and women loomed larger than their wont.

A GIRLS' SCHOOL

It had been taken for granted from the first, that at the earliest opportunity I would open a girls' school in Calcutta.

And it was characteristic of the Swami's methods, that I had not been hurried in the initiation of this work, but had been given leisure and travel and mental preparation. To myself it was clear that this school, when opened, must at first be only tentative and experimental. I had to learn what was wanted, to determine where I myself stood, to explore the very world of which my efforts were to become a part. The one thing that I knew was, that an educational effort must begin at the standpoint of the learner, and help him to development in his own way. But I had no definite plans or expectations, save to make some educational discovery which would be qualitatively true and universally applicable to the work of the modern education of Indian women.*

Others, however, had probably thought more largely of the matter, and I had heard much as to the desirability of holding myself above all sects. But all these questions were solved once for all, on a certain evening in camp, in the forest of Verinag, in Kashmir, when the Swami turned to me, as we all sat in a circle about the log-fire, and asked me what were now my plans for the school. I replied eagerly, begging to be freed from collaborators, to be allowed to begin in a small way, spelling out my method; and urging, above all, the necessity of a definite religious colour, and the usefulness of sects.

The Swami listened and accepted, and as far as his loyalty went to every wish of mine, in this matter, thenceforth, he might have been the disciple and I the teacher. Only in one respect was he inflexible. The work for the education of Indian women to which he would give his name, might be as sectarian as I chose to make it. "You wish through a sect to rise beyond all sects," had been his

*It must here be pointed out that the school in question proved even more tentative than I had imagined. In the autumn of 1903, the whole work for Indian women was taken up and organised by an American disciple, Sister Christine, and to her, and her faithfulness and initiative alone, it owes all its success up to the present. From the experiment which I made in 1898 to 1899, was gathered only my own education.—*Nivedita.*

sole reply to this part of my statement. He withdrew, at the first sign of hesitation on my side, the name of an Indian lady whose help had been proffered. But he would not, on the other hand, countenance my own seeking of assistance amongst the few acquaintances I had already made. For the ocean of Indian character I had as yet no plummet, and it was safer to go long unaided than to commit an error at the start.

A GUEST SELF-INVITED

It was to carry out this plan, then, that I arrived in Calcutta alone, in the beginning of November. I was able to find my way at once, from the station to the north end of the town. But once there, with insular rigidity, I insisted on being made the guest of the women. The Swami was himself staying, as it happened, at a sort of parish-room of the Order, in Calcutta. Through him, therefore, the negotiations were carried on. The widow of Sri Ramakrishna—Sarada Devi, or "the Holy Mother," as she is called amongst us—was living close by, with her community of ladies; and in the course of the day, I was accorded possession of an empty room in her house.

This is one of the occasions on which people look back, feeling that their courage was providentially determined by their ignorance. It is difficult to see how else a necessary solution could have been found. Yet had I deeply understood at the time, the degree of social embarrassment which my rashness might have brought, not only upon my innocent hostess, but also on her kindred in their distant village, I could not have acted as I did. At any cost, I must in that case have withdrawn. As it was, however, I imagined caste to be only a foolish personal prejudice,—which must yield to knowledge,—against some supposed uncleanness of foreign habits, and thus cheerfully assuming all the ignorance to be on her side, confidently forced myself upon this Indian lady's hospitality.

In the event, fortunately, the Swami's influence proved

all-powerful, and I was accepted by society. Within a week or ten days, a house in the close neighbourhood was found for me. But even then, I spent all my afternoons in the Mother's room. And when the hot weather came, it was by her express command that I returned to her better-arranged house, for sleeping-quarters. And then I occupied no room apart, but shared the cool and simple dormitory of the others, with its row of mats, pillows, and nets, against the polished red earthenware of the floor.

THE MOTHER'S HOME

It was a strange household, of which I now found myself a part. Downstairs, in one of the guard-rooms beside the front-door, lived a monk, whose severe austerities, from his youth up, had brought him to the threshold of death, from consumption, in the prime of manhood. To his room I used to go, for Bengali lessons. In the kitchen behind, worked a disciple of his, and a Brahmin cook; while to us women-folk belonged all abovestairs, with roofs and terraces, and the sight of the Ganges hard by.

Of the head of our little community, it seems almost presumptuous to speak. Her history is well-known. How she was wedded at five, and forgotten by her husband till she was eighteen; how she then, with her mother's permission made her way on foot from her village-home to the temple of Dakshineshwar on the Ganges-side, and appeared before him; how he remembered the bond, but spoke of the ideals of the life he had adopted; and how she responded by bidding him Godspeed in that life, and asking only to be taught by him as the Guru,—all these things have been told of her many times over. From that time she lived faithfully by his side for many years, in a building in the same garden, at once nun and wife, and always chief of his disciples. She was young when her tutelage began and in hours of quiet talk, she will tell sometimes in how many directions his training extended. He was a great lover of order, and taught her even such trifles as where

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SRI MA

to keep her lamp and its appurtenances, during the day. He could not endure squalor, and notwithstanding severe asceticism, he loved grace and beauty and gentle dignity of bearing. One story that is told of this period of her life, is of her bringing to him a basket of fruit and vegetables one day, with all the eagerness and pride of a happy child. He looked at it gravely, and said "But why so extravagant?"

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S LOVE

—"At least it was not for myself!" said the young wife, all her sunshine gone, in sudden disappointment, and she turned and went away, crying quietly. But this Sri Ramakrishna could not bear to see. "Go, one of you," he said, turning to the boys beside him, "And bring her back. My very devotion to God will take wings, if I see her weep!"

So dear she was to him. Yet one of her most striking traits is the absolute detachment with which she speaks of the husband she worships. She stands like a rock, through cloud and shine, as those about her tell, for the fulfilment of every word of his. But "Guru Deb!" "Divine Master," is the name she calls him by, and not one word of her uttering ever conveys the slightest trace of self-assertion with regard to him. One who did not know who she was, would never suspect, from speech of hers, that her right was stronger, or her place closer, than that of any other of those about her. It would seem as if the wife had been long ago forgotten, save for her faithfulness, in the disciple. Yet so deeply is she reverenced by all about her, that there is not one of them who would, for instance, occupy a railway berth above her, when travelling with her. Her very presence is to them a consecration.

THE IDEAL WOMAN

To me it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood.

But is she the last of an old order, or the beginning of a new? In her, one sees realised that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood. I have never known her hesitate, in giving utterance to large and generous judgment, however new or complex might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilisation. Yet she rises to the height of every situation. Is she tortured by the perversity of any about her? The only sign is a strange quiet and intensity that comes upon her. Does one carry to her some perplexity or mortification born of social developments beyond her ken? With unerring intuition she goes straight to the heart of the matter, and sets the questioner in the true attitude to the difficulty. Or is there need for severity? No foolish sentimentality causes her to waver. The novice whom she may condemn, for so many years to beg his bread, will leave the place within the hour. He who has transgressed her code of delicacy and honour, will never enter her presence again. "Can't you see," said Sri Ramakrishna, to one who had erred in some such way, "Can't you see that *the woman* in her is wounded? And that is dangerous!"

And yet is she, as one of her spiritual children said of her, speaking literally of her gift of song, "full of music," all gentleness, all playfulness. And the room wherein she worships, withal, is filled with sweetness.

SARADA DEVI'S CULTURE

The Mother can read, and much of her time is passed with her Ramayana. But she does not write. Yet it is not to be supposed that she is an uneducated woman. Not only has she had long and arduous experience in administration, secular and religious; but she has also travelled over a great part of India, visiting most of the chief places of

pilgrimage. And it must be remembered that as the wife of Sri Ramakrishna she has had the highest opportunity of personal development that it is possible to enjoy. At every moment, she bears unconscious witness to this association with the great. But in nothing perhaps does it speak more loudly than in her instant power to penetrate a new religious feeling or idea.

I first realised this gift in the Holy Mother, on the occasion of a visit that she paid us in recent years, on the afternoon of a certain Easter Day. Before that, probably, I had always been too much absorbed, when with her, in striving to learn what she represented, to think of observing her in the contrary position. On this particular occasion, however, after going over our whole house, the Mother and her party expressed a desire to rest in the chapel, and hear something of the meaning of the Christian festival. This was followed by Easter music, and singing, with our small French organ. And in the swiftness of her comprehension, and the depth of her sympathy with these resurrection-hymns, unimpeded by any foreignness or unfamiliarity in them, we saw revealed for the first time, one of the most impressive aspects of the great religious culture of Sarada Devi. The same power is seen to a certain extent, in all the women about her, who were touched by the hand of Sri Ramakrishna. But in her, it has all the strength and certainty of some high and arduous form of scholarship.

The same trait came out again, one evening, when, in the midst of her little circle, the Holy Mother asked my Gurubhagini and myself, to describe to her a European wedding. With much fun and laughter, personating now the "Christian Brahmin," and again the bride and bridegroom, we complied. But we were neither of us prepared for the effect of the marriage vow.

THE MARRIAGE VOW

"For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health,—till death us do part," were words that drew exclamations of delight from all about us. But none appreciated them as did the Mother. Again and again she had them repeated to her. "Oh the Dharmmik words! the righteous words!" she said.

Amongst the ladies who lived more or less continuously in the household of Sarada Devi at this time were Gopal's Mother, Jogin-Mother, Rose-Mother, Sister Lucky, and a number of others. These were all widows,—the first and the last child-widows—and they had all been personal disciples of Sri Ramakrishna when he lived in the temple garden at Dakshineshwar. Sister Lucky, or Lakshmididi as is the Indian form of her name, was indeed a niece of his, and is still a comparatively young woman. She is widely sought after as a religious teacher and director, and is a most gifted and delightful companion. Sometimes she will repeat page after page of some sacred dialogue, out of one of the Jatras, or religious operas, or again she will make the quiet room ring with gentle merriment, as she poses the different members of the party in groups for religious *tableaux*. Now it is Kali, and again Saraswati, another time it will be Jagadhattri, or yet again, perhaps, Krishna under his Kadamba tree, that she will arrange, with picturesque effect and scant dramatic material.

Amusements like these were much approved of, it is said, by Sri Ramakrishna, who would sometimes himself, according to the ladies, spend hours, in reciting religious plays, taking the part of each player in turns, and making all around him realise the utmost meaning of the prayers and worship uttered in the poetry.

GOPALER-MA

Gopal's Mother was an old woman. She had already been old, fifteen or twenty years before, when she had first

walked over, one day at noon, from her cell at Kamarhatty, by the Ganges-side, to see the Master in the garden at Dakshineshwar. He received her, so they say, standing at his door, as if he expected her. And she, whose chosen worship had been for many years Gopala, the Babe Krishna, the Christ-Child of Hinduism—saw Him revealed to her, as in a vision, as she drew near. How true she always was to this! Never once through all the years that followed, did she offer salutation to Sri Ramakrishna, who took her henceforth as his mother. And never have I known her to speak of our Holy Mother, save as "my daughter-in-law."

In the months which I spent with the Mother and her ladies, Gopaler-Ma would sometimes be in Calcutta, and sometimes, for weeks together, away at Kamarhatty. There, a few of us went, one full-moon night, to visit her. How beautiful was the Ganges, as the little boat crept on and on! And how beautiful seemed the long flight of steps rising out of the water, and leading up, through its lofty bathing-ghat, past the terraced lawn, to the cloister-like verandah on the right, where, in a little room,—built probably in the first place for some servant of the great house at its side,—Gopaler-Ma had lived and told her beads, for many a year. The great house was empty now. And her own little room was absolutely without comforts. Her bed was of stone, and her floor of stone, and the piece of matting she offered her guests to sit on, had to be taken down from a shelf and unrolled. The handful of parched rice and sugar-candy that formed her only store, and were all that she could give in hospitality, were taken from an earthen pot that hung from the roof by a few cords. But the place was spotlessly clean, washed constantly by Ganges-water of her own sturdy carrying. And in a niche near her hand lay an old copy of the Ramayana, and her great horn spectacles, and the little white bag containing her beads. On those beads, Gopaler-Ma had become a saint! Hour after hour, day after day, for how many years, had she sat, day and night, absorbed in them!

The radiant white moonlight made the trees and flowers outside seem like black shadows, moving and whispering in a dream-world of white marble. But nothing could seem so dream-like, as, in the midst of our busy hurrying world, the thought of spots like this little cell of Gopaler-Ma, enshrining her silent intensity of peace. "Ah!" said the Swami, when he heard of the visit, "this is the *old* India that you have seen, the India of prayers and tears, of vigils and fasts, that is passing away, never to return!"

In Calcutta, Gopaler-Ma felt, perhaps a little more than others, the natural shock to habits of eighty years' standing at having a European in the house. But once overruled, she was generosity itself. Conservative she always was: stubbornly prejudiced, never. As far as the daily life went there can have been little difference to her consciousness, between her own hermitage on the Ganges-bank, and the conventual round of the Mother's household. The days were full of peace and sweetness. Long before dawn, one and another rose quietly and sat on the sleeping-mat, from which sheets and pillows were now removed, beads in hand, and face turned to the wall. Then came the cleansing of the rooms and personal bathing. On great days, the Mother and one other would be carried down to the river in a palkee and till this arrived, the time was spent in reading the Ramayana.

THE MOTHER'S WORSHIP

Then came the Mother's worship in her own room, with all the younger women busy over lights and incense, Ganges-water and flowers and offerings. Even Gopaler-Ma would aid, as this hour came round, in the preparation of fruits and vegetables. The noonday meal and the restful afternoon would pass, and again as evening drew on, the servant going by the door with the lighted lamp would break in upon our chat. Groups would break up. Each of us would prostrate before image or picture, and touch

the feet of Gopaler-Ma and the Mother, or accompany the latter to where the light was placed, near the basil-plant on the terrace; and fortunate indeed was she who from this was permitted to go, like a daughter, and sit beside the Mother at her evening-meditation, there to learn those salutations to the Guru which formed, with her, the beginning and end of all worship.

The Indian home thinks of itself as perpetually chanting the beautiful psalm of custom. To it, every little act and detail of household method, and personal habit is something inexpressibly precious and sacred, an eternal treasure of the nation, handed down from the past, to be kept unflawed, and passed on to the future. This mode of thought is interwoven with the passionate quest of ideal purity, and with the worship of motherhood, to make the guiding and restraining force of the whole Indian character. The East worships simplicity, and herein lies one of the main reasons why vulgarity is impossible to any Eastern people.

THE SWAMI AND CUSTOM

But no one can point out such a secret as this at the moment when one needs it, for the simple reason that no one can place him sufficiently outside his own consciousness to find out that others were born, not only with a different equipment of associations, but also with a different instinct as to their value. Fortunately, however, by watching the Swami, and puzzling over the contrasts he unconsciously presented, I was able to discover it, and many things were made easier thereby. No one was ever more clearly aware that character was everything, or, as he phrased it, that "custom was nothing," yet none could be more carried away than he by the perfection and significance of all with which he was familiar. To the customs of his own people he brought the eye of a poet, and the imagination of a prophet. He had learnt that "Custom was nothing" when he had met with ideal womanhood and faith amongst

polyandrous peoples, or delicacy and modesty adorned in the evening costumes of the West. But these things had not shaken his reverence for the conventionalities of his own country. The plain white veil of the widow was to him the symbol of holiness as well as sorrow. The Gerrua rags of the Sannyasin, the mat on the floor for a bed, the green leaf instead of a plate, eating with the fingers, the use of the national costume, all these things he appeared to regard as a veritable consecration. Each of them whispered to him some secret of spiritual power or human tenderness. And he answered with a passion of loyalty that would achieve for them, if it could, the very conquest of the world; but failing, would think all heaven lay in sharing their defeat.

Thus he taught me also to sing the melodious song, in feeble and faltering fashion, it is true, but yet in some sort of unison with its own great choir, inasmuch as, with them, I learnt to *listen* through the music, even while following, for the revelation it could bring of a nation's ideals and a nation's heart.

Those months between November 1898 and June 1899, were full of happy glimpses. My little school was begun on the day of Kali Puja, and the Mother herself came and performed the opening ceremony of worship. At the end, she gave a whispered blessing spoken aloud by Rose-Mother. She 'prayed that the blessing of the great Mother might be upon the school, and the girls it should train be ideal girls.' And somehow to know that an undertaking is remembered and fraught with prayer in the lofty mind and heart of our Mother, is to me a benediction that makes content. I cannot imagine a grander omen than her blessing, spoken over the educated Hindu womanhood of the future.

THE DAILY ROUND

The Swami lived commonly at the monastery, five or six miles out of Calcutta, and on the opposite bank of the

river. But, on his frequent visits to town, he would almost always send for me to join him, either at the noon or evening meal, and to those who showed me kindness, he would always make a special effort to offer hospitality at Belur.

Even his smallest actions often had a meaning that was not evident to a new eye. I did not dream, when he came to me one day and asked me to cook for him a certain invalid dish, that there was any special intention in the request. And when I heard afterwards that on receiving it, he had himself eaten very little, preferring to share it with those about him, I was only disappointed, being at that time unaware of the almost sacramental nature of this act. It was many months before I learnt to understand the deep forethought and kindness with which he—and also the Holy Mother on his behalf,—was constantly working to make a place for me, as a foreigner, in Hindu society. The aim of his whole life was, as he had said to me, in Kashmir, "to make Hinduism aggressive, like Christianity and Islam," and this was one of the ways in which he sought to realise that ideal.

HINDUISM PROGRESSIVE

The same purpose spoke again in his definition of the aims of the Order of Ramakrishna—"to effect an exchange of the highest ideals of the East and the West, and to realise these in practice"—a definition whose perfection, and special appropriateness to the present circumstances of India, grows on one with time. To his mind, Hinduism was not to remain a stationary system, but to prove herself capable of embracing and welcoming the whole modern development. She was no congeries of divided sects, but a single living Mother-Church, recognising all that had been born of her, fearless of the new, eager for the love of her children, wherever they might be found, wise, merciful, self-directing, pardoning and reconciling. Above all she was the holder of a definite vision, the preacher of a distinct

message amongst the nations. To prove her this, however, he relied on no force but that of character. The building of the temple of his faith was all-important, it was true; but for it there was infinite time, and with it worked the tendency and drift of things. For himself, the responsibility was to choose sound bricks. And he chose, not with an eye to the intellect, or power of attraction, or volume of force, of those who were chosen, but always for a certain quality of simple sincerity, and, as it seemed, for that alone. Once accepted, the ideal put before them all was the same: not Mukti but renunciation, not self-realisation, but self-abandonment. And this rather, again, on behalf of man, than as an offering to God. It was *the human motive* that he asserted to his disciples. May one of them never forget a certain day of consecration, in the chapel at the monastery, when, as the opening step in a lifetime, so to speak, he first taught her to perform the worship of Shiva, and then made the whole culminate in an offering of flowers at the feet of the Buddha! "Go thou," he said, as if addressing in one person each separate soul that would ever come to him for guidance, "and follow Him, who was born and gave His life for others FIVE HUNDRED TIMES, before. He attained the vision of the Buddha!"

XI

THE SWAMI AND MOTHER-WORSHIP

The story of the glimpses which I caught of this part of the Swami's life would be singularly incomplete, if it contained no mention of his worship of the Mother. Spiritually speaking, I have always felt that there were two elements in his consciousness. Undoubtedly he was born a Brahmajnani, as Ramakrishna Paramahamsa so frequently insisted. When he was only eight years old, sitting at his play, he had developed the power of entering Samadhi. The religious ideas towards which he naturally gravitated, were highly abstract and philosophical, the very reverse of those which are commonly referred to as 'idolatrous'. In his youth, and presumably when he had already been some time under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna, he became a formal member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. In England and America he was never known to preach anything that depended on a special form. The realisation of Brahman was his only imperative, the Adwaita philosophy his only system of doctrine, the Vedas and Upanishads his sole scriptural authority.

THE TERRIBLE

And yet, side by side with this, it is also true that in India the word "Mother" was forever on his lips. He spoke of Her, as we of one deeply familiar in the household life. He was constantly preoccupied with Her. Like other children, he was not always good. Sometimes he would be naughty and rebellious. But always to Her. Never did he attribute to any other, the good or evil that befell. On a certain solemn occasion, he entrusted to a disciple a prayer to Her that in his own life had acted as a veritable charm. "And mind!" he added suddenly, turning with what was almost fierceness upon the receiver, "*make* Her listen to

you, when you say it! *None of that cringing* to Mother! Remember!" Every now and then he would break out with some new fragment of description. The right hand raised in blessing, the left holding the sword,—"Her curse *is* blessing!" would be the sudden exclamation that ended a long reverie. Or becoming half-lyric in the intensity of his feeling, "Deep in the heart of hearts of Her own, flashes the blood-red knife of Kali. Worshippers of the Mother are they from their birth, in Her incarnation of the sword!" From him was gathered, in such moments as these, almost every line and syllable of a certain short psalm, called the "Voice of the Mother," which I wrote and published about this time. "I worship the Terrible!" he was continually saying,—and once, "It is a mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the motive. Quite as many are born to seek after pain. Let us worship the Terror for Its own sake."

NO DEVIL-WORSHIP

He had a whole-hearted contempt for what he regarded as squeamishness or mawkishness. He wasted few words on me, when I came to him with my difficulties about animal sacrifice in the temple. He made no reference, as he might have done, to the fact that most of us, loudly as we may attack this, have no hesitation in offering animal sacrifice to ourselves. He offered no argument, as he easily might have done, regarding the degradation of the butcher and the slaughter-house, under the modern system. "Why not a little blood, to complete the picture?" was his only direct reply to my objections. And it was with considerable difficulty that I elicited from him, and from another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, sitting near, the actual facts of the more austere side of Kali-worship, that side which has transcended the sacrifice of others. He told me however that he had never tolerated the blood-offering commonly made to the "demons who attend on Kali." This was simple devil-worship, and he had no place for it. His own effort being constantly to banish fear and weakness

from his own consciousness and to learn to recognise THE MOTHER as instinctively in evil, terror, sorrow, and annihilation, as in that which makes for sweetness and joy, it followed that the one thing he could not away with was any sort of watering-down of the great conception. "Fools!" he exclaimed once,—as he dwelt in quiet talk on "the worship of the Terrible," on "becoming one with the Terrible"—"Fools! they put a garland of skulls round Thy neck, and then start back in terror, and call Thee 'the Merciful'!" And as he spoke, the underlying egoism of worship that is devoted to the *kind* God, to Providence, the consoling Divinity, without a heart for God in the earthquake, or God in the volcano, overwhelmed the listener. One saw that such worship was at bottom, as the Hindu calls it, merely 'shop-keeping,' and one realised the infinitely greater boldness and truth of the teaching that God manifests through evil *as well as* through good. One saw that the true attitude for the mind and will that are not to be baffled by the personal self, was in fact the determination, in the stern words of the Swami Vivekananda, 'to seek death not life, to hurl oneself upon the sword's point, to become one with the Terrible for evermore!'

A BORN EDUCATOR

It would have been altogether inconsistent with the Swami's idea of freedom, to have sought to impose his own conceptions on a disciple. But everything in my past life as an educationist had contributed to impress on me now the necessity of taking on the Indian consciousness, and the personal perplexity associated with the memory of the pilgrimage to Amarnath was a witness not to be forgotten to the strong place which Indian systems of worship held in that consciousness. I set myself therefore to enter into Kali worship, as one would set oneself to learn a new language, or take birth deliberately, perhaps, in a new race. To this fact I owe it that I was able to understand as much as I did of our Master's life and thought. Step by step,

glimpse after glimpse, I began to comprehend a little. And in matters religious, he was, without knowing it, a born educator. He never checked a struggling thought. Being with him one day when an image of Kali was brought in, and noticing some passing expression, I suddenly said "Perhaps, Swamiji, Kali is the Vision of Shiva! Is She?" He looked at me for a moment. "Well! Well! Express it in your own way," he said gently, "Express it in your own way!"

Another day he was going with me to visit the old Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, in the seclusion of his home in Jorasanko, and before we started, he questioned me about a death-scene at which I had been present the night before. I told him eagerly of the sudden realisation that had come to me, that religions were only languages, and we must speak to a man in his own language. His whole face lighted up at the thought. "Yes!" he exclaimed, "And Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was the only man who taught that! He was the only man who ever had the courage to say that we must speak to all men in their own language!"

Yet there came a day when he found it necessary to lay down with unmistakable clearness his own position in the matter of Mother-worship. I was about to lecture at the Kalighat, and he came to instruct me that if any foreign friends should wish to be present, they were to remove their shoes, and sit on the floor, like the rest of the audience. In that Presence no exceptions were to be made. I was myself to be responsible for this.*

After saying all this, however, he lingered before going, and then, making a shy reference to Colonel Hay's poem of the 'Guardian Angels', he said, "That is precisely my position about Brahman and the gods! I believe in Brahman *and* the gods, and not in anything else!"

*In no temple anywhere, ought there to be any exception. No one has any respect for a man who cannot stand for the dignity and sacredness of his own place of worship.—*N.*

KALI AND VEDANTA

He was evidently afraid that my intellectual difficulty would lie where his own must have done, in the incompatibility of the exaltation of one definite scheme of worship with the highest Vedantic theory of Brahman. He did not understand that to us who stood about him, he was himself the reconciliation of these opposites, and the witness to the truth of each. Following up this train of thought, therefore, he dropped into a mood of half-soliloquy, and sat for a while talking disjointedly, answering questions, trying to make himself clear, yet always half-absorbed in something within, as if held by some spell he could not break.

THE DEDICATION

"How I used to hate Kali!" he said, "And all Her ways! That was the ground of my six years' fight,—that I would not accept Her. But I had to accept Her at last! Ramakrishna Paramahamsa dedicated me to Her, and now I believe that She guides me in every little thing I do, and does with me what She will..... Yet I fought so long! I loved him, you see, and that was what held me. I saw his marvellous purity..... I felt his wonderful love..... His greatness had not dawned on me then. All that came afterwards, when I had given in. At that time I thought him a brain-sick baby, always seeing visions and the rest. I hated it. And then I too had to accept Her!

"No, the thing that made me do it is a secret that will die with me. I had great misfortunes at that time..... It was an opportunity..... She made a slave of me. Those were the very words—'a slave of you.' And Ramakrishna Paramahamsa made me over to Her... Strange! He lived only two years after doing that, and most of the time he was suffering. Not more than six months did he keep his own health and brightness.

"Guru Nanak was like that, you know, looking for the

one disciple to whom he would give his power. And he passed over all his own family,—his children were as nothing to him,—till he came upon the boy to whom he gave it, and then he could die.

"The future, you say, will call Ramakrishna Paramahamsa an Incarnation of Kali? Yes, I think there's no doubt that She worked up the body of Ramakrishna for Her own ends.

"You see, I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power That thinks of Herself as feminine, and called Kali, and Mother ..... And I believe in Brahman too ..... But is it not always like that? Is it not the multitude of cells in the body that make up the personality, the many brain-centres, not the one, that produce consciousness? ..... Unity in complexity! Just so! And why should it be different with Brahman? It *is* Brahman. It *is* the One. And yet—and yet—it is the gods too!"

Similarly, he had returned from a pilgrimage in Kashmir saying "These gods are not merely symbols! They are the forms that the Bhaktas have seen!" And it is told of Sri Ramakrishna that he would sometimes speak, coming out of Samadhi, of the past experience of that soul that dwelt within him,—"He who came as Rama, as Krishna, as Jesus dwells here"—and then would add playfully, turning to his chief disciple, "But not in your Vedanta sense, Noren!"

Thus we are admitted to a glimpse of the struggle that goes on in great souls, for the correlation and mutual adjustment of the different realisations of different times. On the one side the Mother, on the other side Brahman. We are reminded of the Swami's own words, heard long ago, "The impersonal God, seen through the mists of sense, is personal." In truth it might well be that the two ideas could not be reconciled. Both conceptions could not be equally true at the same time. It is clear enough that in the end, as a subjective realisation, either the Mother must become Brahman, or

Brahman the Mother. One of the two must melt into the other, the question of which, in any particular case, depending on the destiny and the past of the worshipping soul.

THE TRUST CARRIED

For my own part, the conversation I have related marked an epoch. Ever since it took place, I have thought I saw in my Master's attitude a certain element of one who carried for another a trust confided to him. He would always, when asked to explain the image of Kali, speak of it as the book of experience, in which the soul turns page after page, only to find that there is nothing in it, after all. And this, to my own mind, is the final explanation. Kali the Mother is to be the worship of the Indian future. In Her name will her sons find it possible to sound many experiences to their depths. And yet, in the end their hearts will return to the ancient wisdom, and each man will know, when his hour comes, that all his life was but as a dream.

THE PLAY OF THE MOTHER

Who does not remember the Veda-like words of the Gita?—"Not, verily, by avoiding action, can a man rise to this inaction!" May we not, similarly, know for a certainty that not without going through this experience can we reach the realisation at the end? Through the Mother to Brahman, through new life and knowledge, and many changes, through the struggles, the victories, and the defeats of the immediate future, to that safe haven of the soul where all is One and all is peace? As I look more and more closely into the life of that great Teacher whom I have followed, I see each day with growing clearness, how he himself was turning the pages of the book of experience, and that it was only when he had come to the last word that he could lie back like a weary child, in the arms of his Mother, to be wrapped away at last into the Supreme Revelation, knowing that 'all this was but a dream!'

XII

HALF-WAY ACROSS THE WORLD

On the 20th of June 1899, I left Calcutta by the same steamer as the Swami, and his gurubhai Turiyananda, for London, which we reached on the morning of July 31st. A few weeks later he left England for America, where I met him once more, late in September. After the five or six weeks which I spent there, as a guest in the same house as he, and a fortnight in Brittany in the following year, 1900, I never again enjoyed any long unbroken opportunity of being with him. Towards the end of 1900 he returned to India, but I remained in the West until the beginning of 1902. And when I then reached India, it was only as if to be present at the closing scene, to receive the last benediction. To this voyage of six weeks I look back as the greatest occasion of my life. I missed no opportunity of the Swami's society that presented itself, and accepted practically no other, filling up the time with quiet writing and needlework ; thus I received one long continuous impression of his mind and personality, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful.

VINDICATION OF MAN

From the beginning of the voyage to the end, the flow of thought and story went on. One never knew what moment would see the flash of intuition, and hear the ringing utterance of some fresh truth. It was while we sat chatting in the River on the first afternoon, that he suddenly exclaimed, "Yes! the older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new gospel. Do even evil like a man! Be wicked, if you must, on a great scale!" And these words link themselves in my memory with those of another day, when I had been

reminding him of the rareness of criminality in India. And he turned on me, full of sorrowful protest, "Would God it were otherwise in my land!" he said, "for this is verily the virtuousness of death!"

INDIAN HISTORY

Stories of the Shiva-Ratri, or Dark Night of Shiva, of Prithi Rai, of the judgment seat of Vikramaditya, of Buddha and Yasodhara, and a thousand more, were constantly coming up. And a noticeable point was, that one never heard the same thing twice. There was the perpetual study of caste; the constant examination and restatement of ideas; the talk of work, past, present, and future; and above all the vindication of Humanity, never abandoned, never weakened, always rising to new heights of defence of the undefended, of chivalry for the weak. Our Master has come and he has gone, and in the priceless memory he has left with us who knew him, there is no other thing so great, as this his love of man.

I cannot forget his indignation when he heard some European reference to cannibalism, as if it were a normal part of life in some societies. "That is not true!" he said, when he had heard to the end. "No nation ever ate human flesh, save as a religious sacrifice, or in war, out of revenge. Don't you see? that's not the way of gregarious animals! It would cut at the roots of social life!" Kropotkin's great work on "Mutual Aid" had not yet appeared, when these words were said. It was his love of Humanity, and his instinct on behalf of each in his own place, that gave to the Swami so clear an insight.

Again he talked of the religious impulse, "Sex-love and creation!" he cried. "These are at the root of most religion. And these in India are called Vaishnavism, and in the West Christianity. How few have dared to worship Death, or Kali! Let us worship Death! Let us embrace the Terrible, because it is terrible; not asking that it be toned down. Let us take misery, for misery's own sake!"

As we came to the place where the river-water met the ocean, we could see why the sea had been called 'Kali Pani' or black water, while the river was 'Sadha Pani' or white, and the Swami explained how it was the great reverence of Hindus for the ocean, forbidding them to defile it by crossing it, that had made such journeys equal to outcasting for so many centuries. Then, as the ship crossed the line, touching the sea for the first time, he chanted "Namo Shivaya! Namo Shivaya! Passing from the Land of Renunciation to the Land of the Enjoyment of the World!"

He was talking again, of the fact that he who would be great must suffer, and how some were fated to see every joy of the senses turn to ashes, and he said, "The whole of life is only a swan-song! Never forget those lines—

'The lion, when stricken to the heart, gives
out his mightiest roar.
When smitten on the head, the cobra lifts its hood.
And the majesty of the soul comes forth,
only when a man is wounded to his depths.'"

Now he would answer a question, with infinite patience, and again he would play with historic and literary speculations. Again and again his mind would return to the Buddhist period, as the *crux* of a real understanding of Indian history.

BUDDHISM IN HINDUISM

"The three cycles of Buddhism," he said one day, "were five hundred years of the Law, five hundred years of Images, and five hundred years of Tantras. You must not imagine that there was ever a religion in India called Buddhism, with temples and priests of its own order! Nothing of the sort. It was always within Hinduism. Only at one time the influence of Buddha was paramount, and this made the nation monastic." He had been discussing the question of the adoption into Buddhism, as its

saints, of the Nags of Kashmir (the great serpents who were supposed to dwell within the springs), after the terrible winter that followed their deposition as deities.

And he drifted on to talk about the Soma plant, picturing how, for a thousand years after the Himalayan period, it was annually received in Indian villages as if it were a king, the people going out to meet it on a given day, and bringing it in rejoicing. And now it cannot even be identified!

SALUTATION TO THE GURU

Again it was Sher Shah of whom he talked,—Sher Shah, making a thirty years' interim in the reign of Humayoon. I remember the accession of delight with which he began the subject, saying "He was once a boy, running about the streets of Bengal!" He ended by showing how the Grand Trunk Road from Chittagong to Peshawar, the Postal system, and the Government Bank, were all his work. And then there were a few minutes of silence, and he began reciting lines from the Guru Gita. "To that Guru who is Brahman, to that Guru who is Vishnu, to that Guru who is Shiva, to that Guru who is Para Brahman, I bow down to that Guru. From the Guru is the beginning, yet is he without beginning: to that Guru who is greatest among the gods, to that Guru who is Para Brahman, I bow down to that Guru." He was pursuing some train of thought within, to which these snatches of prayer bore some relation. A moment or two went by, and suddenly he broke his reverie, saying "Yes, Buddha was right! It *must* be cause and effect in Karma. This individuality cannot but be an illusion!" It was the next morning, and I had supposed him to be dozing in his chair, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Why the memory of one life is like millions of years of confinement, and they want to wake up the memory of many lives! Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof!"

CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL

"I have just been talking to Turiyananda about conservative and liberal ideas," he said, as he met me on deck before breakfast one morning, and straightway plunged into the subject.

"The conservative's whole ideal is *submission.* Your ideal is struggle. Consequently it is *we* who enjoy life, and never you! You are always striving to change yours to something better, and before a millionth part of the change is carried out, you die. The Western ideal is to be doing; the Eastern to be suffering. The perfect life would be a wonderful harmony between doing and suffering. But that can never be.

"In our system it is accepted that a man cannot have all he desires. Life is subjected to many restraints. This is ugly, yet it brings out points of light and strength. Our liberals see only the ugliness, and try to throw it off. But they substitute something quite as bad, and the new custom takes as long as the old, for us to work to its centres of strength.

"Will is not strengthened by change. It is weakened and enslaved by it. But we must be always absorbing. Will grows stronger by absorption. And consciously or unconsciously, will is the one thing in the world that we admire. Suttee is great, in the eyes of the whole world, because of the will that it manifests.

"It is selfishness that we must seek to eliminate! I find that whenever I have made a mistake in my life, it has always been because *self* entered into the calculation. Where self has not been involved, my judgment has gone straight to the mark.

"Without this self, there would have been no religious systems. If man had not wanted anything for himself, do you think he would have had all this praying and worship? Why! he would never have thought of God at all, except perhaps for a little praise now and then, at

the sight of a beautiful landscape or something. And that is the only attitude there ought to be. All praise and thanks. If only we were rid of self!"

"You are quite wrong", he said again, "when you think that fighting is a sign of growth. It is not so at all. Absorption is the sign. Hinduism is a very genius of absorption. We have never cared for fighting. Of course we could strike a blow now and then, in defence of our homes! That was right. But we never cared for fighting for its own sake. Every one had to learn that. So let these races of newcomers whirl on! They'll all be taken into Hinduism in the end!"

He never thought of his Mother-Church or his Motherland except as dominant; and again and again, when thinking of definite schemes, he would ejaculate, in his whimsical way, "Yes, it is true! If European men or women are to work in India, it *must* be under the black man!"

INDIAN ACHIEVEMENTS

He brooded much over the national achievement. "Well! Well!" he would say, "We have done one thing that no other people ever did. We have converted a whole nation to one or two ideas. Non-beef-eating for instance. Not one Hindu eats beef. No, no!"—turning sharply round—"it's not at all like European non-cat-eating; for beef was formerly the food of the country!"

We were discussing a certain opponent of his own, and I suggested that he was guilty of putting his sect above his country. "That is Asiatic," retorted the Swami warmly, "and it is grand! Only he had not the brain to conceive, nor the patience to wait!" And then he went off into a musing on Kali.

"I am not one of those," he chanted,
"Who put the garland of skulls round Thy neck,
"And then look back in terror
"And call Thee 'The Merciful'!
"The heart must become a burial ground,

"Pride, selfishness, and desire all broken into dust,
"Then and then alone will the Mother dance there!"

"I love terror for its own sake," he went on, "despair for its own sake, misery for its own sake. Fight always. Fight and fight on, though always in defeat. That's the ideal. That's the ideal."

"The totality of all souls, not the human alone", he said once, "is the Personal God. The will of the Totality nothing can resist. It is what we know as Law. And this is what we mean by Shiva and Kali, and so on."

Some of the most beautiful scenes in the world have been made for me more beautiful, by listening, in their midst, to these long soliloquies.

It was dark when we approached Sicily, and against the sunset sky, Etna was in slight eruption. As we entered the straits of Messina, the moon rose, and I walked up and down the deck beside the Swami, while he dwelt on the fact that beauty is not external, but already in the mind. On one side frowned the dark crags of the Italian coast, on the other, the island was touched with silver light. "Messina must thank *me*!" he said, "It is I who give her all her beauty!"

RELIGIOUS AUSTERITY

Then he talked of the fever of longing to reach God, that had wakened in him as a boy, and of how he would begin repeating a text before sunrise, and remain all day repeating it, without stirring. He was trying here to explain the idea of Tapasya, in answer to my questions, and he spoke of the old way of lighting four fires, and sitting in the midst, hour after hour, with the sun overhead, reining in the mind. "Worship the terrible!" he ended, "Worship Death! All else is vain. All struggle is vain. That is the last lesson. Yet this is not the coward's love of death, not the love of the weak, or the suicide. It is the welcome of the strong man, who has sounded everything to its depths, and ***knows*** that there is no alternative."

XIII

GLIMPSES OF THE SAINTS

The Swami talked with me one day, of the saints he had seen. The subject began perhaps with that Nag Mahashoy, who had paid him a visit in Calcutta, only a few weeks before, and whose death must have occurred a day or two previous to our leaving.* The news reached him, while the ship was still in the River. Nag Mahashoy, he said repeatedly, was "one of the greatest of the works of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa." He described his impassioned idea of the necessity of Bhakti, and how he would refuse to give food, to the body of one so worthless and unfortunate as he himself was, in never yet having loved God. He told me, too, how on one occasion Nag Mahashoy had cut down the ridge-pole of his cottage, in order to make the fire to cook food for a guest.

The talk passed perhaps, to the story of that youth who was touched by Sri Ramakrishna's hand, and who never afterwards spoke, save to say "My Beloved! My Beloved!" He lived ten years, without other speech than this.

A VISION OF THE MADONNA

There were many stories current amongst the monks, of persons who had come to Dakshineshwar during the lifetime of their Master, and being touched by his hand, went immediately into Samadhi. In many cases, nothing more was known of the visitants than this. This was notably true of a certain woman, who had driven to the Temple and of whom Sri Ramakrishna had said at once that she was "a fragment of the Madonnahood of the worlds." He

* (Nag Mahashoy died in the last week of December, 1899, not as stated in the text—Ed.)

had offered salutation to this guest, in the name of the Mother, throwing flowers on her feet and burning incense before her, and she, as was not perhaps surprising, had passed immediately into the deepest Samadhi. From this, however, to everyone's surprise, it had proved most difficult to recall her. It was two or three hours before she awoke from her ecstasy, and when this happened her whole appearance it is said, was as that of one who had been intoxicated. Much relieved that all was ending thus well, however,—for it had been feared that her Samadhi might last much longer, and her family, wherever they were, feel justly disturbed—all lent their aid to the departure of the stranger from the temple, and none had the forethought to make a single enquiry as to her name or abode. She never came again. Thus her memory became like some beautiful legend, treasured in the Order as witness to the worship of Sri Ramakrishna for gracious and noble wifehood and motherhood. Had he not said of this woman, "a fragment of the eternal Madonnahood?"

LIVES TRANSFORMED

In my own ignorance of religious matters in general, my mind felt out much after these stray children of the central impulse, shining like distant stars in their own orbits, as it were, and never returning upon us or ours. I wanted to know whether, even in lives so fair as theirs, it might perhaps be possible to forget the great experience of a day long years ago, so that the memory of the great Teacher and his touch would become to them also a far-away incident, a story heard in a dream, even as their visits had become to those who saw them pass. I wanted in fact to be able to measure the relative values of many things, and I left out of sight at that time altogether,—having not yet begun to consider it—the preparedness which the national idea has produced in every Hindu for such experiences. But the Swami could not understand my mental twilight. "Was it a joke," he said, "that Rama-

krishna Paramahamsa should touch a life? Of course he made new men and new women of those who came to him, even in these fleeting contacts!" And then he would tell story after story of different disciples. How one came, and came again, and struggled to understand. And suddenly to this one, he turned and said "Go away now, and make some money! Then come again!" And that man today was succeeding in the world, but the old love was proving itself ever alight. There was no mention of the defects of this, or any other of whom he told. As one listened it was the courage and nobility of each man's struggle that one felt. Why should every man force himself to be a monk? Nay, how *could* every man, till his other work was done? But there would be no mistake in the end. All these would be his at last.

Similarly, of the saints. His whole soul went to the interpretation of each, as he rose before him, and it would have been impossible at that moment for the listener to think of any other as higher. Of Pavhari Baba he had so striven to tell us everything, that it would have seemed scarcely delicate to press vague questions upon him further. All who had been with him at the time of the saint's death knew that he held him second only to Sri Ramakrishna, knew that there was none whose love to himself he had more valued.

Now he set himself to tell stories for an hour, of one or two others whom he had met. Trailinga Swami he had seen when very, very old, more than a hundred, apparently. He was always silent. He would lie in a Shiva-temple in Benares, with his feet on the image. A madcap, seemingly. He allowed people, however, to write him questions, and sometimes, if he fancied one, would write an answer in Sanskrit. This man was lately dead.

RAGHUNATH DASS

Raghunath Dass had been dead two months, when the Swami reached his Ashrama. He had been a soldier

originally in the British service, and as an outpost sentinel was faithful and good, and much beloved by his officers. One night, however, he heard a Ram-Ram party. He tried to do his duty, but, "Jaya Bolo Ram Chunder ki jai!" maddened him. He threw away his arms and uniform, and joined the worship.

This went on for some time, till reports came to the Colonel. He sent for Raghunath Dass, and asked him whether these were true, and if he knew the penalty. Yes, he knew it. It was to be shot.

"Well," said the Colonel, "Go away this time, and I shall repeat it to no one. This once I forgive you. But if the same thing happens again, you must suffer the penalty."

That night, however, the sentinel heard again the Ram-Ram party. He did his best, but it was irresistible. At last he threw all to the winds, and joined the worshippers till morning.

Meanwhile, however, the Colonel's trust in Raghunath Dass had been so great that he found it difficult to believe anything against him, even on his own confession. So in the course of the night, he visited the outpost, to see for himself. Now Raghunath Dass was in his place, and exchanged the word with him three times. Then, being reassured, the Colonel turned in, and went to sleep.

In the morning appeared Raghunath Dass to report himself and surrender his arms. But the report was not accepted, for the Colonel told him what he had himself seen and heard.

Thunderstruck, the man insisted by some means on retiring from the service. Rama it was who had done this for His servant. Henceforth, in very truth, he would serve no other.

"He became a Vairagi," said the Swami, "on the banks of the Saraswati. People thought him ignorant, but I knew his power. Daily he would feed thousands. Then would come the grain-seller, after a while, with his bill.

'H'm! Raghunath Dass would say, 'A thousand rupees you say? Let me see. It is a month I think since I have received anything. This will come, I fancy, tomorrow.' And it always came."

Some one asked him if the story of the Ram-Ram party were true.

"What's the use of knowing such things?" he answered.

"I do not ask for curiosity," urged the questioner, "but only to know if it is possible for such things to happen!"

"Nothing is impossible with the Lord!" answered Raghunath Dass.....

AT HRISHIKESH

"I saw many great men," went on the Swami, "in Hrishikesh. One case that I remember was that of a man who seemed to be mad. He was coming nude down the street, with boys pursuing, and throwing stones at him. The whole man was bubbling over with laughter, while blood was streaming down his face and neck. I took him, and bathed the wound, putting ashes* on it, to stop the bleeding. And all the time, with peals of laughter, he told me of the fun the boys and he had been having, throwing the stones. 'So the Father plays,' he said."

"Many of these men hide, in order to guard themselves against intrusion. People are a trouble to them. One had human bones strewn about his cave, and gave it out that he lived on corpses. Another threw stones. And so on".....

"Sometimes the thing comes upon them in a flash. There was a boy, for instance, who used to come to read the Upanishads with Abhedananda. One day he turned and said 'Sir, is all this really true?'

'Oh yes!' said Abhedananda, 'it may be difficult to realise, but it is certainly true.'

*These ashes are made by burning a piece of cotton cloth.—N.

"And next day, that boy was a silent Sannyasin, nude, on his way to Kedar Nath!

"What happened to him? you ask. He became silent!"

"But the Sannyasin needs no longer to worship or to go on pilgrimage, or perform austerities. What, then, is the motive of all this going from pilgrimage to pilgrimage, shrine to shrine, and austerity to austerity? He is acquiring merit, and giving it to the world!"

SHIBI RANA

And then, perhaps, came the story of Shibi Rana. "Ah yes!" exclaimed the teller, as he ended, "these are the stories that are deep in our nation's heart! Never forget that the Sannyasin takes two vows, one to realise the truth, and one to help the world, and that the most stringent of stringent requirements is that he should renounce any *thought* of heaven!"

XIV

PAST AND FUTURE IN INDIA

Even a journey round the world becomes a pilgrimage, if one makes it with the Guru. It was late one evening, in the Red Sea, when I brought to the Swami some perplexity, of a personal nature, about the right method of helpfulness to others. It was rarely, indeed, that he would answer a question of this sort, without first turning for authority to some *dictum* of the Shastras. And how grateful does one become later for this fact! It was his personal opinion that one desired. But giving this, as he did, in the form of a comment on some text, it went much deeper into the mind, and became the subject of much longer thought and consideration, than if he answered at once, in the sense required by the impatient questioner.

THE BROKEN VOW

In the same way, when I had asked him what becomes of those who failed to keep their vows, he had gone all the way round by a beautiful Sanskrit quotation, to answer me. Even now, I hear the ring of his wonderful voice, repeating Arjuna's question:

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥
कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥

Gita vi. 37, 38.

They who begin with Shraddha, and afterwards become unsteady, to what end do those come, O Krishna, who fail in Yoga? Do they, fallen from both estates, perish,—*blasted, like a summer-cloud before the wind*?

And the answer of Sri Krishna, fearless, triumphant,—

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।
नहि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥

"Neither here nor hereafter, O son of Pritha, shall such meet with destruction. Never shall one who has done good, come to grief, O my son!"

And then he drifted into a talk that I can never forget. First he explained how everything, short of the absolute control of mind, word, and deed, was but "the sowing of wild oats." Then he told how the religious who failed would sometimes be born again to a throne, 'there to sow his wild oats,' in gratifying that particular desire which had led to his downfall. 'A memory of the religious habit,' he said, 'often haunts the throne.' For one of the signs of greatness was held to be the persistence of a faint memory. Akbar had had this memory. He thought of himself as a Brahmacharin who had failed in his vows. But he would be born again, in more favourable surroundings, and that time he would succeed. And then there came one of those personal glimpses which occurred so seldom with our Master. Carried away by the talk of memory, he lifted the visor for a moment, on his own soul. "And whatever you may think," he said, turning to me suddenly, and addressing me by name, "I have such a memory! When I was only two years old, I used to play with my syce, at being a Vairagi, clothed in ashes and Kaupina. And if a Sadhu came to beg, they would lock me in, upstairs, to prevent my giving too much away. I felt that I also was this, and that for some mischief I had had to be sent away from Shiva. No doubt my family increased this feeling, for when I was naughty they would say 'Dear, dear! so many austerities, yet Shiva sent us this demon after all, instead of a good soul!' Or when I was very rebellious they would empty a can of water over me, saying 'Shiva! Shiva!' And then I was all right, always. Even now, when I feel

mischievous, that word keeps me straight. 'No!' I say to myself, 'not this time!' "

TAMASIC CHARITY

On the present occasion, then, he went back, in similar fashion, to the Gita. "The Gita says," he answered me, "that there are three kinds of charity, the Tamasic, the Rajasic, and the Sattvic. Tamasic charity is performed on an impulse. It is always making mistakes. The doer thinks of nothing but his own impulse to be kind. Rajasic charity is what a man does for his own glory. And Sattvic charity is that which is given to the right person, in the right way, and at the proper time. Your own," he said, referring to the incident that had brought about my question, "was, I fear, like the Tamasic charity. When it comes to the Sattvic, I think more and more of a certain great Western woman, in whom I have seen that quiet giving, always to the right person in the right way, at the right time, and never making a mistake. For my own part, I have been learning that even charity can go too far."

His voice sank into silence, and we sat looking out over the starlit sea. Then he took up the thread again. "As I grow older I find that I look more and more for greatness in *little* things. I want to know what a great man eats and wears, and how he speaks to his servants. I want to find a Sir Philip Sidney greatness! Few men would remember the thirst of others, even in the moment of death.

"But anyone will be great in a great position! Even the coward will grow brave in the glare of the foot-lights. The world looks on. Whose heart will not throb? Whose pulse will not quicken, till he can do his best?"

TRUE GREATNESS

"More and more the true greatness seems to me that of the worm, doing its duty silently, steadily, from moment to moment, and hour to hour."

How many points on the map have received a new beauty in my eyes, from the conversations they recall! As we passed up the coast of Italy, we talked of the Church. As we went through the Straits of Bonifacio, and sat looking at the south coast of Corsica, he spoke in a hushed voice of "this land of the birth of the War-Lord," and wandered far afield, to talk of the strength of Robespierre, or to touch on Victor Hugo's contempt for Napoleon III, with his "Et *tu* Napoleon!"

As I came on deck, on the morning of our passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, he met me with the words "Have you seen them? Have you seen them? Landing there and crying 'Din! Din! The Faith! The Faith!'" And for half-an-hour I was swept away into his dramatisation of the Moorish invasions of Spain.

Or again, on a Sunday evening, he would sit and talk of Buddha, putting new life into the customary historic recital of bare facts, and interpreting the Great Renunciation as it had appeared to him who made it.

But his talks were not all entertaining, nor even all educational. Every now and then he would return, with consuming eagerness, to the great purpose of his life. And when he did this, I listened with an anxious mind, striving to treasure up each word that he let fall. For I knew that here I was but the transmitter, but the bridge, between him and that countless host of his own people, who would yet arise, and seek to make good his dreams.

HIS MESSAGE

One of these occasions came on a certain evening, as we neared Aden. I had asked him, in the morning, to tell me, in broad outline, what he felt to be the points of difference between his own schemes for the good of India, and those preached by others. It was impossible to draw him out on this subject. On the contrary, he expressed appreciation of certain personal characteristics and lines of conduct, adopted by some of the leaders of other schools,

and I regarded the question as dismissed. Suddenly, in the evening, he returned to the subject of his own accord.

"I disagree with all those," he said, "who are giving their superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish. One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies, one's dreams. *My* hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new state of things must be a *growth* from within."

BE STRONG

"So I preach only the Upanishads. If you look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upanishads. And of the Upanishads, it is only that one idea *strength*. The quintessence of Vedas and Vedanta and all, lies in that one word. Buddha's teaching was of Non-resistance or Non-injury. But I think this is a better way of teaching the same thing. For behind that Non-injury lay a dreadful weakness. It is weakness that conceives the idea of resistance. I do not think of punishing or escaping from a drop of sea-spray. It is nothing to me. Yet to the mosquito it would be serious. Now I would make all injury like that. Strength and fearlessness. My own ideal is that giant of a saint whom they killed in the Mutiny, and who broke his silence, when stabbed to the heart, to say—'And thou also art He!'

"But you may ask—what is the place of Ramakrishna in this scheme?

"He is the method, that wonderful unconscious method! He did not understand himself. He knew nothing of England or the English, save that they were queer folk from over the sea. But he lived that great life,—and I read the meaning. Never a word of condemnation for any! Once I had been attacking one of our sects of Diabolists. I had been raving on for three hours, and he had listened quietly. 'Well, well!' said the old man

as I finished, 'perhaps every house may have a back door. Who knows?'

"Hitherto the great fault of our Indian religion has lain in its knowing only two words—renunciation and Mukti. Only Mukti *here*! Nothing for the householder!

"But these are the very people whom I want to help. For are not all souls of the same quality? Is not the goal of all the same?

"And so strength must come to the nation through education."

I thought at the time, and I think increasingly, as I consider it, that this one talk of my Master had been well worth the whole voyage, to have heard.

XV

ON HINDUISM

The Swami was constantly preoccupied with the thought of Hinduism as a whole, and this fact found recurring expression in references to Vaishnavism. As a Sannyasin, his own imagination was perhaps dominated by the conceptions of Shaivaism. But Vaishnavism offered him a subject of perpetual interest and analysis. The thing he knew by experience was the truth of the doctrine of Adwaita. The symbols under which he would seek to convey this were the monastic ideal and the Worship of the Terrible. But these were truths for heroes. By their means, one might gather an army. The bulk of mankind would always think of God as a Divine Providence, a tender Preserver, and the question of questions was how to deepen the popular knowledge of the connection between this type of belief and the highest philosophy. With regard to the West, indeed, the bridges had actually to be built. Adwaita had to be explained and preached. But in India, all this had been done long ago. The facts were universally admitted. It was only necessary to renew realisation, to remind the nation of the inter-relation of all parts of its own faith, and to go again and again over the ground, in order to see that no weak point remained in the argument by which Vaishnavism was demonstrated to be as essential to the highest philosophy, as that philosophy was acknowledged to be, to it.

THE SANKHYA PHILOSOPHY

Thus he loved to dwell on the spectacle of the historical emergence of Hinduism. He sought constantly for

the great force *behind* the evolution of any given phenomenon. Where was the thinker behind the founder of a religion? And where, on the other hand was the heart to complete the thought? Buddha had received his philosophy of the five categories—form, feeling, sensation, motion, knowledge—from Kapila. But Buddha had brought the love that made the philosophy live. Of no one of these, Kapila had said, can anything be declared. For each *is* not. It but was, and is gone. "Each is but the ripple on the waters. Know, Oh man! thou art the sea!"

Krishna, in his turn, as the preacher and creative centre of popular Hinduism, awoke in the Swami a feeling which was scarcely second to his passionate personal adoration of Buddha. Compared to His many-sidedness, the Sannyas of Buddha was almost a weakness. How wonderful was the Gita! Reading it, as a boy, he would be stopped every now and then by some great sentence, which would go throbbing through his brain for days and nights. "They who find pleasure and pain the same, heat and cold the same, friend and foe the same!" And that description of the battle—a spirited battle too!—with the opening words of Krishna, "Ill doth it befit thee, Arjuna, thus to yield to unmanliness!" How strong! But besides this, there was the beauty of it. The Gita, after the Buddhist writings, was such a relief! Buddha had constantly said "I am for the People!" And they had crushed, in his name, the vanity of art and learning. The great mistake committed by Buddhism lay in the destruction of the old.

For the Buddhist books were torture to read. Having been written for the ignorant, one would find only one or two thoughts in a huge volume.* It was to meet the

*It is not to be supposed that the Swami here referred to the Dhammapada—a work which he always placed on a level with the Gita. The reference, I think, was rather to such books as those Jataka Birth Stories which are published in two volumes in Trubner's Oriental Series.

need thus roused, that the Puranas were intended. There had been only one mind in India that had foreseen this need, that of Krishna, probably the greatest man who ever lived. He recognises at once the need of the People, and the desirability of preserving all that had already been gained. Nor are the Gopi story and the Gita (which speaks again and again of women and Shudras) the only forms in which he reached the ignorant. For the whole Mahabharata is his, carried out by his worshippers, and it begins with the declaration that it is for the People.

LIFE REVEALS GOD

"Thus is created a religion that ends in the worship of Vishnu, as the preservation and enjoyment of life, leading to the realisation of God. Our last movement, Chaitanyism, you remember, was for enjoyment.* At the same time, Jainism represents the other extreme, the slow destruction of the body by self-torture. Hence Buddhism, you see, is reformed Jainism, and this is the real meaning of Buddha's leaving the company of the five ascetics. In India, in every age, there is a cycle of sects which represents every gradation of physical practice, from the extreme of self-torture to the extreme of excess. And during the same period will always be developed a metaphysical cycle, which represents the realisation of God as taking place by every gradation of means, from that of using the senses as an instrument, to that of the annihilation of the senses. Thus Hinduism always consists, as it were, of two counter-spirals, completing each other, round a single axis.

"Yes! Vaishnavism says, 'It is all right! this tremendous love for father, for mother, for brother, husband, or child! It is all right, if only you will think that Krishna is the child, and when you give him food, that you are feeding Krishna!' This was the cry of Chaitanya, 'Wor-

*The Swami was characterising doctrine here; he was not speaking of the personal asceticism of Sri Chaitanya, which has probably never been surpassed.

ship God *through* the senses!' as against the Vedantic cry, 'Control the senses! suppress the senses!'

"At the present moment, we may see three different positions of the national religion—the orthodox, the Arya Samaj, and the Brahmo Samaj. The orthodox covers the ground taken by the Vedic Hindus of the Mahabharata epoch. The Arya Samaj corresponds with Jainism, and the Brahmo Samaj with the Buddhists."

INDIA NOT EFFETE

"I see that India is a young and living organism. Europe also is young and living. Neither has arrived at such a stage of development that we can safely criticise its institutions. They are two great experiments, neither of which is yet complete. In India, we have social communism, with the light of Adwaita—that is, spiritual individualism—playing on and around it; in Europe, you are socially individualists, but your thought is dualistic, which is spiritual communism. Thus the one consists of socialist institutions, hedged in by individualistic thought, while the other is made up of individualist institutions, within the hedge of communistic thought.

"Now we must help the Indian experiment as it is. Movements which do not attempt to help things as they are, are, from that point of view, no good. In Europe for instance, I respect marriage as highly as non-marriage. Never forget that a man is made great and perfect as much by his faults as by his virtues. So we must not seek to rob a nation of its character, even if it could be proved that that character was all faults."

THE WORSHIP OF HUMANITY

His mind was extraordinarily clear on the subject of what he meant by individualism. How often has he said to me "You do not yet understand India! We Indians are MAN-worshippers, after all! Our God is man!" He meant here the great individual man, the man of self-realisation

—Buddha, Krishna, the Guru, the Maha-Purusha. But on another occasion, using the same word in an entirely different sense, he said, "This idea of man-worship* exists in nucleus in India, but it has never been expanded. You must develop it. Make poetry, make art, of it. Establish the worship of the feet of beggars, as you had it in Mediaeval Europe. Make man-worshippers."

He was equally clear, again, about the value of the image. "You may always say," he said, "that the image is God. The error you have to avoid, is to think God the image." He was appealed to, on one occasion, to condemn the fetichism of the Hottentot. "I do not know," he answered, "what fetichism is!"

A lurid picture was hastily put before him, of the object alternately worshipped, beaten, thanked. "*I* do that!" he exclaimed. "Don't you see," he went on, a moment later, in hot resentment of injustice done to the lowly and absent, "Don't you see that there is no fetichism? Oh, your hearts are steeled, that you cannot see that the child is right! The child sees person everywhere. Knowledge robs us of the child's vision. But at last, through higher knowledge, we win back to it. He connects a living power with rocks, sticks, trees, and the rest. And is there not a living Power behind them? It is *symbolism,* not fetichism! Can you not see?"

THE MIMANSAKAS

But while every sincere ejaculation was thus sacred to him, he never forgot for a moment the importance of the philosophy of Hinduism. And he would throw perpetual flashes of poetry into the illustration of such arguments as are known to lawyers. How lovingly he would dwell upon the Mimansaka philosophy! With what pride he would remind the listener that according to Hindu *savants,*

*That is to say, the worship of the manhood which exists in any man, in all men, apart from their individual achievement of thought or character, humanity.

"the whole universe is only *the meaning of words*. After the word comes the thing. Therefore, the idea is all!" And indeed, as he expounded it, the daring of the Mimansaka argument, the fearlessness of its admissions and the firmness of its inferences, appeared as the very glory of Hinduism. There is assuredly no evasion of the logical issue in a people who can say, even while they worship the image, that the image is nothing but the idea made objective; that prayer is powerful in proportion to the concentration it represents; that the gods exist only in the mind, and yet the more assuredly exist. The whole train of thought sounded like the most destructive attack of the iconoclast, yet it was being used for the exposition of a faith! One day, he told the story of Satyabhama's sacrifice and how the word "Krishna," written on a piece of paper, and thrown into the balances, made Krishna himself, on the other side, kick the beam. "Orthodox Hinduism," he began, "makes Sruti, the sound, everything. The *thing* is but a feeble manifestation of the pre-existing and eternal idea. So the *name* of God is everything: God Himself is merely the objectification of that idea in the eternal mind. Your own name is infinitely more perfect than the person, you! The name of God is greater than God. Guard you your speech!" Surely there has never been another religious system so fearless of truth! As he talked, one saw that the whole turned on the unspoken conviction, self-apparent to the Oriental mind, that religion is not a creed but an experience; a process, as the Swami himself has elsewhere said, of being and becoming. If it be true that this process leads inevitably from the apprehension of the manifold to the realisation of the One, then it must also be true that everything is in the mind, and that the material is nothing more than the concretising of ideas. Thus the Greek philosophy of Plato is included within the Hindu philosophy of the Mimansakas, and a doctrine that sounds merely empiric on the lips of Europe, finds reason and necessity, on those of India. In

the same way, as one declaring a truth self-evident, he exclaimed, on one occasion, "I would not worship even the Greek gods, for they were separate from humanity! Only those should be worshipped who are like ourselves, but greater. The difference between the gods and me must be a difference only of degree."

INDIAN LOGIC

But his references to philosophy did not by any means always consist of these epicurean tit-bits. He was merciless, as a rule, in the demand for intellectual effort, and would hold a group of unlearned listeners through an analysis of early systems, for a couple of hours at a stretch, without suspecting them; of weariness or difficulty. It was evident, too, at such times, that his mind was following the train of argument in another language, for his translations of technical terms would vary from time to time.

In this way he would run over the six objects with which the mind has to deal, in making up the universe according to the Vaisheshik formulation. These were substance,* quality, action, togetherness, classification or differentiation, and inseparable inherence as between cause and effect, parts and the whole. With this he would compare the five categories of Buddhism,—form, feeling, consciousness, reaction [*i.e.* the resultant of all previous impressions], and Vidya, or judgment. The Buddhist made form the resultant of all the others, and nothing by itself: the goal therefore, for Buddhism, was beyond Vidya [which Buddhism called Prajna], and outside the five categories. Side by side with this, he would place the three illusive categories of the Vedanta (and of Kant)—time, space, and causation [Kala-Desh-Nimitta] appearing as name-and-form, which is Maya, that is to say, neither existence nor non-existence. It was clear, then, that the seen was not,

*Substance, according to the Vaisheshik, consists of the five elements, time, space, mind and soul.

according to this, a being. Rather is it an eternal, changeful process. Being is one, but process makes this being appear as many. Evolution and involution are both alike in Maya. They are certainly not in Being [Sat], which remains eternally the same.

Nor would western speculations pass forgotten, in this great restoration of the path the race had come by. For this was a mind which saw only the seeking, pursuing, enquiry of man, making no arbitrary distinctions as between ancient and modern. The analysis of the modern syllogism—under the old Indian title of "the five limbs of the argument"—would be followed by the four proofs of the Nyayas. These were, (1) direct perception; (2) inference; (3) analogy; (4) testimony. According to this logic, the induction and deduction of the moderns were not recognised; inference was regarded as always from the more known to the less known, or from the less to the more. The inference from direct perception was divided into three different kinds: first, that in which the effect is inferred from the cause; second, that in which cause is inferred from effect, and thirdly, the case in which inference is determined by concomitant circumstances. Methods of inference, again, were fivefold: by agreement, by difference, by double method of agreement and difference, by partial method of agreement, and by partial method of difference. The two last were sometimes classed together as the method of the residuum. It was quite clear that only the third of these could furnish a perfect inference; that is to say, "proof is only complete when the negative has been proved, as well as the affirmative. Thus God can never be proved to be the cause of the Universe.

ALL IS INFERENCE

"There is, again, the fact of pervasiveness. A stone falls, and crushes a worm. Hence we infer that all stones, falling, crush worms. Why do we thus immediately reapply a perception? Experience, says some one. But it

happens, let us suppose, for the first time. Throw a baby into the air, and it cries. Experience from past lives? But why applied to the future? Because there is a real connection between certain things, a *pervasiveness,* only it lies with us to see that the quality neither overlaps, nor falls short of, the instance. On this discrimination depends all human knowledge.

"With regard to fallacies, it must be remembered that direct perception itself can only be a proof, provided the instrument, the method, and the persistence of the perception, are all maintained pure. Disease, or emotion, will have the effect of disturbing the observation. *Therefore direct perception itself is but a mode of inference.* Therefore all human knowledge is uncertain, and may be erroneous. Who is a true witness? He is a true witness to whom the things said is a direct perception. Therefore the Vedas are true, because they consist of the evidence of competent persons. But is this power of perception peculiar to any? No! The Rishi, the Aryan, and the Mlechha all alike have it.

"Modern Bengal holds that evidence is only a special case of direct perception, and that analogy and parity of reasoning are only bad inferences. Therefore of actual proofs there are only two, direct perception and inference.

"One set of persons, you see, gives priority to the external manifestation, the other to the internal idea. Which is prior, the bird to the egg, or the egg to the bird? Does the oil hold the cup or the cup the oil? This is a problem of which there is no solution. Give it up! Escape from Maya!"

XVI

GLIMPSES IN THE WEST

On July the 31st, we arrived in London, and the voyage that to myself had been so memorable, was over. The Swami spent a few weeks in Wimbledon, but at this time of the year, not many of his friends were in town, and before long he acceded to the invitations which were constantly reaching him and went on to America, there to wait in a beautiful country-home on the Hudson, for the leading that he confidently expected, to show him where his next effort was to lie. A month later, I became a guest in the same house, and continued to see him daily, until November the 5th, that is to say, six or seven weeks later. After that date, when our party was broken up, the Swami paid a few visits in New York and its neighbourhood. At the end of the month he passed through Chicago, where I then was, on his way to California. Again I met him in New York in the following June (1900). There for a few weeks, and later in Paris for a similar length of time, I saw him frequently; and in September, finally, I spent a fortnight as his fellow-guest, with American friends, in Brittany. So ends the priceless memory of the years of my schooling under him. For when I next saw my Master, in India in the first half of 1902, it was only to receive his final blessing and take a last farewell.

Discipleship is always serenely passive, but it changes, at a 'moment's notice, into strenuous effort and activity, when the personal presence of the Teacher is withdrawn. And this last was what our Master above all expected of his disciples. He said once that whenever a young monk, received for a few weeks or months into the monastery, complained that as yet he had learnt nothing, he always sent him back for a while to the world he had left, there

to find out how very much he had in fact absorbed. Every parting from him was like the entrusting of a standard for warfare. "Be the heroic Rajput wife!" he exclaimed in an undertone on one occasion, to a girl who was about to give way to emotion, at saying farewell to her betrothed. And the words acted like a charm. His last words, after my brief glimpse of him in Chicago, were "Remember! the message of India is always *'Not the soul for nature, but nature for the soul'*!"

THE FAREWELL CHARGE

When I said good-bye to him in Brittany in September, 1900, I was on the eve of returning alone to England, there to find friends and means, if possible, for the Indian work. I knew nothing as yet of the length of my stay. I had no plans. And the thought may have crossed his mind that old ties were perilous to a foreign allegiance. He had seen so many betrayals of honour that he seemed always to be ready for a new desertion. In any case, the moment was critical to the fate of the disciple, and this he did not fail to realise. Suddenly, on my last evening in Brittany, when supper was some time over, and the darkness had fallen, I heard him at the door of my little arbour-study, calling me into the garden. I came out, and found him waiting to give me his blessing, before leaving with a man-friend, for the cottage where they were both housed.

"There is a peculiar sect of Mohammedans," he said, when he saw me, "who are reported to be so fanatical that they take each newborn babe, and expose it, saying, 'If God made thee, perish! If Ali made thee, live!' Now this which they say to the child, I say, but in the opposite sense, to you, tonight—'Go forth into the world, and there, if I made you, be destroyed! If Mother made you, live'!"

Yet he came again next morning, soon after dawn, to say farewell, and in my last memory of him in Europe,

I look back once more from the peasant market-cart, and see his form against the morning sky, as he stands on the road outside our cottage at Lannion, with hands uplifted, in that Eastern salutation which is also benediction.

The outstanding impression made by the Swami's bearing, during all these months of European and American life, was one of almost complete indifference to his surroundings. Current estimates of value left him entirely unaffected. He was never in any way startled or incredulous under success, being too deeply convinced of the greatness of the Power that worked through him, to be surprised by it. But neither was he unnerved by external failure. Both victory and defeat would come and go. He was their witness. "Why should I care, if the world itself were to disappear?" he said once. "According to my philosophy, that, you know, would be a very good thing! But in fact," he added, in tones suddenly graver, "All that is against me must be with me in the end. Am I not HER soldier?"

He moved fearless and unhesitant through the luxury of the West. As determinedly as I had seen him in India, dressed in the two garments of simple folk, sitting on the floor and eating with his fingers, so, equally without doubt of shrinking, was his acceptance of the complexity of the means of living in America or France. Monk and king, he said, were obverse and reverse of a single medal. From the use of the best to the renunciation of all, was but one step. India had thrown all her prestige in the past, round poverty. Some prestige was in the future to be cast round wealth.

Rapid changes of fortune, however, must always be the fate of one who wanders from door to door, accepting the hospitality of foreign peoples. These reversals he never seemed to notice. No institution, no environment, stood between him and any human heart. His confidence in that Divine-within-Man of which he talked, was as perfect, and his appeal as direct, when he talked with the imperialist

aristocrat or the American millionaire, as with the exploited and oppressed. But the out-flow of his love and courtesy were always for the simple.

LOVE OF THE LOWLY

When, travelling in America, he had at first in certain Southern towns been taken for a negro, and refused admission to the hotels, he had never said that he was not of African blood, but had as quietly and gratefully availed himself of the society of the coloured race, when that was offered, as of that of the local magnates who hastened round him later, in mortified apology for what they deemed the insult put upon him. "What! rise at the expense of another!" he was heard to say to himself, long after, when some one referred with astonishment to this silence about his race, "Rise at the expense of another! I didn't come to earth for that!" It is not for the monk to dictate terms: the monk submits. Often, in after-years, he spoke of the pathos of the confidences regarding race-exclusion, which he had received at this time. Few things ever gave him such pleasure as a negro railway-servant who came up to him on one occasion, in a station, saying that he had heard how in him one of his own people had become a great man, and he would like to shake hands. Finally, it was never possible, in his presence, for the vulgar social exultation of the white man to pass unrebuked. How stern he would become at any sign of this! How scathing was his reproof! And above all, how glowing was the picture he would paint, of a possible future for these children of the race, when they should have outstripped all others, and become the leaders of Humanity! He was scornful in his repudiation of the pseudo-ethnology of privileged races. "If I am grateful to my white-skinned Aryan ancestor," he said, "I am far more so to my yellow-skinned Mongolian ancestor, and most so of all, to the black-skinned Negritoid!"

THE TARTAR BLOOD

He was immensely proud, in his own physiognomy, of what he called his 'Mongolian Jaw,' regarding it as a sign of 'bull-dog tenacity of purpose'; and referring to this particular race-element, which he believed to be behind every Aryan people, he one day exclaimed, "Don't you see? the Tartar is the wine of the race! He gives energy and power to every blood!"

INACTIVITY IN ACTIVITY

In seeking to penetrate his indifference to circumstance, one has to remember that it was based on constant effort to find the ideal thinking-place. Each family, each hearthstone, was appreciated by him, in the degree in which it provided that mental and emotional poise which makes the highest intellectual life possible. One of a party who visited Mont Saint Michael with him on Michaelmas Day 1900, and happened to stand next to him, looking at the dungeon-cages of mediaeval prisoners, was startled to hear him say, under his breath, "What a wonderful place for meditation!" There are still some amongst those who entertained him in Chicago in 1893, who tell of the difficulty with which, on his first arrival in the West, he broke through the habit of falling constantly into absorption. He would enter a tram, and have to pay the fare for the whole length of the line, more than once in a single journey, perhaps, being too deeply engrossed in thought to know when he had reached his destination. As years went on, and these friends met him from time to time, they saw the gradual change to an attitude of apparent readiness and actuality. But such alterations were little more than surface-deep. Beneath, the will glowed with all its old fervour, the mind held itself ever on the brink of the universal. It seemed almost as if it were by some antagonistic power, that he was 'bowled along from place to place, being broken the while,' to use his own graphic phrase. "Oh

I know I have wandered over the whole earth," he cried once, "but in India I have looked for nothing, save the cave in which to meditate!"

And yet he was a constant and a keen observer. Museums, universities, institutions, local history, found in him an eager student. It was the personal aspect of conditions that left him unaffected. Never did the contrast between two hemispheres pass before a mind better fitted to respond to its stimulus. He approached everything through the ideas which it sought to express. During the voyage to England, he came on deck one day, after a sound sleep, and told me that he had in his dreams been pursuing a discussion, as between Eastern and Western ideals of marriage, and had come to the conclusion that there was something in both that the world could ill afford to lose. At the end of his last visit to America, he told me that on first seeing Western civilisation he had been greatly attracted by it, but now he saw mainly its greed and power. Like others, he had accepted without thought the assumption that machinery would be a boon to agriculture, but he could now see that while the American farmer, with his several square miles to farm, might be the better for machines, they were likely to do little but harm on the tiny farm-lands of the Indian peasantry. The problem was quite different in the two cases. Of that alone, he was firmly convinced. In everything including the problem of distribution, he listened with suspicion to all arguments that would work for the elimination of small interests, appearing in this as in so many other things, as the perfect, though unconscious expression, of the spirit of the old Indian civilisation. A strong habit of combination he was able to admire, but what beauty of combination was there, amongst a pack of wolves?

PRIDE OF COUNTRY

He had an intense objection to discussing the grievances, or the problems of India, in a foreign country; and

felt deeply humiliated when this was done in his presence. Nor did he ever fail, on the other hand, to back a fellow-countryman against the world. It was useless for Europeans to talk to him of their theories, if an Indian investigator in the same line had come to an opposite conclusion. With the simplicity and frankness of a child, he would answer that he supposed his friend would invent more delicate instruments, and make more accurate measurements, which would enable him to prove his point.

Thus, student and citizen of the world as others were proud to claim him, it was yet always on the glory of his Indian birth that he took his stand. And in the midst of the surroundings and opportunities of princes, it was more and more the monk who stood revealed.

XVII

THE SWAMI'S MISSION CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE

The mission of Buddha, in the centuries before the Christian era, was twofold. He was the source, on the one hand, of a current of energy, that swept out from the home-waters to warm and fertilise the shores of distant lands. India, scattering his message over the Eastern world, became the maker of nations, of churches, of literatures, arts and scientific systems, in countries far beyond her own borders. But within India proper, the life of the Great Teacher was the first nationaliser. By democratising the Aryan culture of the Upanishads, Buddha determined the common Indian civilization, and gave birth to the Indian nation of future ages.

Similarly, in the great life that I have seen, I cannot but think that a double purpose is served,—one of world-moving, and another, of nation-making. As regards foreign countries, Vivekananda was the first authoritative exponent, to Western nations, of the ideas of the Vedas and Upanishads. He had no dogma of his own to set forth. "I have never," he said, "quoted anything but the Vedas and Upanishads, and from them only that the word *strength*!" He preached Mukti instead of heaven; enlightenment instead of salvation; the realisation of the Immanent Unity, Brahman, instead of God; the truth of all faiths, instead of the binding force of any one.

THE FOCUS OF BOOKS

Western scholars were sometimes amazed and uncomfortable, at hearing the subject of the learned researches of the study poured out as living truths with all the fervour of the pulpit, but the scholarship of the preacher proved

itself easily superior to any tests they could offer. His doctrine was no academic system of metaphysics, of purely historic and linguistic interest, but the heart's faith of a living people who have struggled continuously for its realisation, in life and in death, for twenty-five centuries. Books had been to him not the source and fountain of knowledge, but a mere commentary on, and explanation of, a Life whose brightness would, without them have dazzled him, and left him incapable of analysing it. It had been this same life of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa that had forced upon him the conviction that the theory of Adwaita, as propounded by Shankaracharya—the theory that all is One, and there is no second—was ultimately the only truth. It was this life, re-enforced of course by his own experience, that had convinced him that even such philosophies* as seemed to culminate at a point short of the Absolute Oneness, would prove in the end to be dealing with phases only, of this supreme realisation.

THE HOME A TEMPLE

As an expression of this goal, however, every sincere belief was true. "Bow thy head and adore," had said Sri Ramakrishna, "where others worship, for in that form in which man has called on Him, God will assuredly appear." At each step between the earth and the sun, said the Swami, we might conceivably take a photograph. No two of these would be perfectly similar. Yet which could be said to be untrue? These sayings referred to the compatibility of the antagonistic religious ideas of different sects and creeds. But when the Teacher of Dakshineshwar set himself to determine the accessibility of the highest illumination through the life of woman, we are perhaps justified in feeling that he opened the door to a deeper regard for the sacredness of what is commonly considered to be merely

*Dualism, the doctrine of the ultimate difference between soul and God, saved and Saviour; and Qualified Dualism, the mergence of the soul in the realisation of God, but not in His being.

social and secular. In a world of symbols, he proved the service of the home as true a means to God as attendance on the altar; the sacraments of the temple, though served by priestly hands, not more a means of grace than the common bread of the household, broken and distributed by wife or mother. "Everything, even the name of God," said Sri Ramakrishna, "is Maya. But some of this Maya helps us towards freedom; the rest only leads us deeper into bondage." In showing, that the daily life of a good woman was thus blessed, that a home was a temple, that courtesy, hospitality, and the fulfilment of duty in the world might be made into one long act of worship, Sri Ramakrishna, as I think, provided basis and sanction for what was to be a predominant thought with his great disciple.

The Swami Vivekananda, in his wanderings over India during subsequent years, studied its multitude of small social formations, each embodying its central religious conviction, and found in all broken gleams of that brightness which he had seen at its fullest in his Master. But when, in 1893, he began to see the world outside India, it was by national and patriotic unities that he was confronted. And in these, as naturally as in the creeds and sects of his own land, he continued to feel the outworking of the Divine within Man. For many years, this was entirely unconscious, yet no one around him stood unimpressed by his eager study of the strong points of different peoples.

One day, in the course of my voyage to England, when he had been telling me, with the greatest delight, of the skilled seamanship and exquisite courtesy of the Turk, I drew his attention to the astonishing character of his enthusiasm. His mind seemed to turn to the thought of the ship's servants, whose childlike devotion to himself had touched him deeply. "You see, I love our Mohammedans!" he said simply, as if accused of a fault. "Yes," I answered, "but what I want to understand is this habit of seeing every people from their strongest aspect. Where did it come

from? Do you recognise it in any historical character? Or is it in some way derived from Sri Ramakrishna?"

Slowly the look of puzzled surprise left his face. "It must have been the training under Ramakrishna Paramahamsa," he answered. "We all went by his path to some extent. Of course it was not so difficult for us as he made it for himself. He would eat and dress like the people he wanted to understand, take their initiation, and use their language. 'One must learn,' he said, 'to put oneself into another man's very soul.' And this method was his own! No one ever before in India became Christian and Mohammedan and Vaishnava by turns!"

THE GREATNESS OF NATIONS

Thus a nationality, in the Swami's eyes, had all the sacredness of a church,—a church whose inmost striving was to express its own conception of ideal manhood. "The longer I live", he was once heard to ejaculate, "the more I think that the whole thing is summed up in manliness!"

By a reflex of consciousness, the more he became acquainted with the strength and lovableness of other nations, the more proud he grew of his Indian birth, becoming daily more aware of those things in which his own Motherland, in her turn, stood supreme. He discussed nations, like epochs, from various points of view successively, not blinding himself to any aspect of their vast personality. The offspring of the Roman Empire he considered always to be brutal, and the Japanese notion of marriage he held in horror. Unvaryingly, nevertheless, he would sum up the case in terms of the constructive ideals, never of the defects, of a community; and in one of the last utterances I heard from him on these subjects, he said, "For patriotism, the Japanese! For purity, the Hindu! And for manliness, the European! There is no other in the world," he added with emphasis, "who understands, as does the Englishman, what should be the glory of a man!"

AGGRESSIVE HINDUISM

His object as regards India, said the Swami, in a private conversation, had always been "to make Hinduism aggressive." The Eternal Faith must become active and proselytising, capable of sending out special missions, of making converts, of taking back into her fold those of her own children who had been perverted from her, and of the conscious and deliberate assimilation of new elements. Did he know that any community becomes aggressive, that any faith will be made active, the moment it becomes aware of itself as an organised unity? Did he know that he himself was to make this self-recognition possible to the Church of his forefathers? At any rate, his whole work, from the first, had consisted, according to his own statement, of "a search for the common bases of Hinduism." He felt instinctively that to find these and reassert them, was the one way of opening to the Mother-Church the joyous conviction of her own youth and strength. Had not Buddha preached renunciation and Nirvana, and because these were the essentials of the national life, had not India, within two centuries of his death, become a powerful empire? So he, too, would fall back upon the essentials, and declare them, leaving results to take care of themselves.

He held that the one authority which Hinduism claimed to rest upon, the only guide she proposed to the individual soul, was "spiritual truth." Those laws of experience that underlie, and give birth to, all scriptures, were what she really meant by the word "Vedas." The books called by that name were refused by some of her children—the Jains for example—yet the Jains were none the less Hindus for that. All that is true is Veda, and the Jain is to the full as much bound by his view of truth as any other. For he would extend the sphere of the Hindu Church to its utmost. With her two wings he would cover all her fledglings. "I go forth," he had said of himself before he left for America the first time, "I go forth, to

preach a religion of which Buddhism is nothing but a rebel child, and Christianity, with all her pretensions, only a distant echo!" Even as books, however, he would claim that the glory of the Vedic scriptures was unique in the history of religion. And this not merely because of their great antiquity; but vastly more for the fact that they, alone amongst all the authoritative books of the world, warned man that he must go beyond all books.

THE GLORY OF HINDUISM

Truth being thus the one goal of the Hindu creeds, and this being conceived of, not as revealed truth to be accepted, but as accessible truth to be experienced, it followed that there could never be any antagonism, real or imagined, between scientific and religious conviction, in Hinduism. In this fact the Swami saw the immense capacity of the Indian peoples for that organised conception of science peculiar to the modern era. No advance of knowledge had ever been resisted by the religious intellect of India. Nor had the Hindu clergy,—a greater glory still!—ever been known to protest against the right of the individual to perfect freedom of thought and belief. This last fact, indeed, giving birth to the doctrine of the *Ishta Devata**—the idea that the path of the soul is to be chosen by itself—he held to be the one universal *differentia* of Hinduism; making it not only tolerant, but absorbent, of every possible form of faith and culture. Even the temper of sectarianism, characterised by the conviction that God Himself is of the believer's creed, and his limited group the one true church, and allying itself, as it now and then will, with every statement that man has ever formulated, was regarded by Hinduism, he pointed out, as a symptom, not of falsehood or narrowness, but only of youth. It constituted, as Sri Ramakrishna had said, the intellectual fence,

*The chosen Ideal.

so necessary to the seedling, but so inimical to the tree. The very fact that we could impose limitations, was a proof that we were still dealing with the finite. When the cup of experience should be full, the soul would dream only of the Infinite. "All men hedge in the fields of earth, but who can hedge in the sky?" had said the Master.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

The vast *complexus* of systems which made up Hinduism, was in every case based upon the experimental realisation of religion, and characterised by an infinite inclusiveness. The only tests of conformity ever imposed by the priesthood had been social, and while this had resulted in a great rigidity of custom, it implied that to their thinking the mind was eternally free. But it could not be disputed that the thought-area within Hinduism, as actually realised, had been coloured by the accumulation of a few distinctive ideas, and these were the main subjects of the Swami's Address before the Parliament of Religions, at Chicago, in 1893.

First of these special conceptions, with which India might be said to be identified, was that of the cyclic character of the cosmos. On the relation of Creator and created, as equal elements in dualism which can never be more than a relative truth, Hinduism had a profound philosophy, which Vivekananda, with his certainty of grasp, was able to set forth in a few brief words. The next doctrine which he put forward, as distinctive of Indian thought in general, was that of re-incarnation and Karma, ending in the manifestation of the divine nature of man. And finally, the universality of truth, whatever the form of thought or worship, completed his enumeration of these secondary *differentia*. In a few clear sentences, he had conclusively established the unity, and delineated the salient features, of Hinduism. The remainder of his work in the West was, in the main, a free gift in modern and

universal forms, of the great inspirations contained in the Eternal Faith. To him, as a religious teacher, the whole world was India, and man, everywhere, a member of his own fold.

CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY

It was on his return to India, in January 1897, that the Swami, in philosophic form, made that contribution to the thought of his people, which, it has been said elsewhere, is required by India of all her epoch-makers. Hitherto, the three philosophic systems—of Unism, Dualism, and Modified Unism, or Adwaita, Dwaita, and Vishishtadwaita—had been regarded as offering to the soul, three different ideals of liberation. No attempt had ever before been made to reconcile these schools. On reaching Madras, however, in 1897, Vivekananda boldly claimed that even the utmost realisations of Dualism and Modified Unism, were but stages on the way to Unism itself; and the final bliss, for all alike, was the mergence in One without a second. It is said that at one of his midday question-classes, a member of his audience asked him why, if this was the truth, it had never before been mentioned by any of the Masters. It was customary to give answers to these questions, first in English and then in Sanskrit, for the benefit of such scholars present as knew no modern language, and the great gathering was startled, on this occasion, to hear the reply "—Because I was born for this, and it was left for me to do!"

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

In India, the Swami was extremely jealous of any attempt to exclude from Hinduism any of her numerous branches and offshoots. A man was none the less a Hindu, for instance, in his eyes, for being a member of the Brahmo or the Arya Samaj. The great Sikh *Khalsa* was one of the finest organisations ever created within the Mother-Church, and by her genius. With what ardour he painted for us, again and again, the scene in which Guru Govinda

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Photo taken in Madras, February 1897

21 WEST THIRTY FOURTH STREET

New York. N. Y.

March 18th 1900.

My dearest Father - Here I am writing it in the 18th of March - Do think Ihave been looking forward so long without any conscious reason - I think all looked forward months ago to the third Sixth.

Mr Bull is also in New York. He's spending his nights usually with Miss Thursby. Which I shall tell you. She goes home to Cambridge on Friday next.

I am glad I have seen these things. What a wonderful group of people intimate friends are. Master the Cathedrals. Wondering possibility of brilliant conversation sublime

In a letter Prof. Gibbs to his wife.

FACSIMILE OF SISTER'S LETTER TO SWAMIJI

Singh uttered his call to sacrifice! There were, he held, three different stratifications to be recognised in the Faith. One was that of the old historic Orthodoxy. Another consisted of the reforming sects of the Mohammedan period. And third came the reforming sects of the present period. But all these were equally Hindu. He never forgot that his own longing to consider the problems of his country and his religion on the grand scale, had found its first fulfilment in his youthful membership of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*. And he was so far from repudiating this membership, that he one day exclaimed—"It is for them to say whether I belong to them or not! Unless they have removed it, my name stands on their books to this day!" Thus a man was equally Hindu, in his opinion, whether he prefixed to the adjective the modification of Arya, Brahmo, or Orthodox.

JAINISM

The claim of the Jain to a place within the fold, was a simple matter of social and historical demonstration. The Jains of Western India would be indignant to this day, if their right to rank as Hindus were seriously questioned. Even now they exchange daughters in marriage, with orthodox houses, of caste correspondent to their own. And even now, their temples are served occasionally by ordinary Brahmins. The Swami had disciples amongst all faiths, even the Mohammedan, and, by the good offices of certain of his Jain friends, he was allowed to read some of their sacred books, not usually accessible, except to members of their own congregations. From this study, he was deeply impressed with the authenticity of their doctrines and traditions, and with the important part which they had played in the evolution of Hinduism. Indian religion necessarily includes amongst its strongest ideas, a regard for the immanent humanity in dumb animals, and deep devotion to the ascetic ideal of sainthood. These two features had been isolated and

emphasised by the Jains. In their clear pronouncements on the Germ Theory, moreover, confirmed as these have been by the researches of modern science, there was evidence sufficient of the intellectual and spiritual stature of the founders of the school. The Jain is obviously right, said the Swami, in claiming that his doctrines were in the first place declared by Rishis.

With regard to the Christianised castes of the present day, the Swami hoped that they would rise in social status by adopting the faith of the dominant political faction, and that in ages to come, when Christianity should be forgotten, they would still be able to maintain this advance. In this way, we might hope for a future oblivion of the nineteenth century, as a disintegrating force, and the permanent enriching of the Indian system by its contributions. In evidence of the possibility of such a development, was there not the work of Chaitanya in Northern India, and the fact that he had succeeded in forming, for his followers, "a caste of very great respectability?"

LOVE FOR ISLAM

Christianity, in her present-day workings, was difficult to pardon. Not so the other non-Hindu faith, Islam. The picture that this name called up to our Master's mind was always of eager confraternity, enfranchising the simple and democratising the great. As a factor in the evolution of modern India, he could never for a moment be forgetful of the loyal acceptance, by Islamic intruders, of the old Indian civilisation, and administrative system. Nor could he disregard the service they had done, not only in exalting the social rights of the lowly-born, but also in conserving and developing, in too gentle a race, the ideals of organised struggle and resistance. He constantly pointed out that Mohammedanism had its fourfold 'castes'—Syyed, Pathan, Mogul and Sheikh—and that of these the Sheikhs had an inherited right to the Indian soil and the Indian memory, as ancient and indisputable as those of any Hindu. He

told a disciple, *a propos* of an indiscreetly-written word, that "Shah Jehan would have turned in his grave to hear himself called a 'foreigner'." And finally, his higest prayer for the good of the Motherland was that she might make manifest the twofold ideal of "an Islamic body and a Vedantic heart."

Thus—far aloof as he stood from the political significance of such facts,—India, to Vivekananda's thinking, was a unity, and a unity still more deeply to be apprehended of the heart than of the mind. His work in the world, as he saw it, was the sowing broadcast of the message of his own Master. But his personal struggles, his personal desires, were bound up in an inextinguishable passion for his country's good. He never proclaimed nationality, but he was himself the living embodiment of that idea which the word conveys. He, our Master, incarnates for us in his own person, that great mutual love which is the Indian national ideal.

TRUE ORTHODOXY

Nothing was less in his mind, be it understood, than a mere revival or restoration of the Indian past. It was to those who sought to bring this about that he had referred, when he said "Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, their interest in India is a purely selfish one. They would fain see again that India of their books, their studies, and their dreams." What he himself wanted was to see the strength of that old India finding new application and undreamt-of expression, in the new age. He longed to see "a dynamic religion." Why should one select out all the elements of meanness and decadence and reaction, and call them 'Orthodox'? Orthodoxy was a term too grand, too strong, too vital, for any such use. It would be rightly applied only to that home where all the men were Pandava heroes, and all the women had the greatness of Sita or the fearlessness of Savitri. He stood aloof from all special questions, whether of conservatism or reform ; not because

he sympathised with one party more or less than with the other, but because he saw that for both alike the real question was the recapture of the ideal, and its indentification with India. On behalf of Woman and the People, alike, he held that the duty required of us was not to change institutions, but to put these in a position to solve their own problems.

INDIA AND MIRADES

At least equal to this dislike of ignorance was his horror of the identification of India with what is known as Occultism. He had the natural interest and curiosity of educated persons, and would at any time have been glad to undergo inconvenience, in order to put to the test alleged cases of walking on water, handling fire and so on. We all know, however, that evidence regarding such matters is apt to vanish into the merst hearsay, when followed up. And in any case, such occurrences would have had no significance for him, beyond pointing the simple moral that our present classification of phenomena was incomplete, and must be revised, to include some unfamiliar possibilities. They would have had no supernatural character whatsoever. Few things in the life of Buddha moved him so deeply as the tale of the unfrocking of the monk who had worked a miracle. And he said of the Figure that moves through the Christian Gospels that its perfection would have seemed to him greater, had there been a refusal to gain credence by the "doing of mighty works." In this matter, it is probably true as I have heard it pointed out in later years, by the Swami Sadananda, that there is a temperamental, as well as intellectual, divergence between Eastern and Western Asia, the one always despising, and the other seeking for "a sign." In this respect, according to Sadananda, the Mongolian and Semitic conceptions are sharply opposed; while the Aryan stands between, weighing the two. However this may be, it will be admitted

by many of us that the modern interest in so-called occult phenomena has been largely instrumental in creating a mischievous idea that the Oriental is a being of mysterious nature, remote from the ordinary motives of mankind, and charged with secret batteries of supernatural powers. All this was hateful to the Swami. He desired to see it understood that India was peopled with human beings, who have indeed an intensely individual character, and a distinctive culture, but who are in all respects men amongst men, with all the duties, claims, and emotions of common humanity.

NO MYSTERY

He, indeed, had the generosity to extend to the West, the same gospel that the Indian sages had preached in the past to the Indian people—the doctrine of the Divinity in man, to be realised by faithful service, through whatever forms. The life of externals, with its concentration of interest in sense-impressions, was, according to him, a mere hypnotism, a dream, of no exalted character. And for Western, as for Eastern, the soul's quest was the breaking of this dream, the awakening to a more profound and powerful reality. He was for ever finding new ways to express his belief that all men alike had the same vast potentiality. "Yes! my own life is guided by the enthusiasm of a certain great Personality," he said once, "but what of that? Inspiration was never filtered out to the world through one man!"

Again he said, "It is true that I believe Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to have been inspired. But then I am myself inspired also. And you are inspired. And your disciples will be ; and theirs after them ; and so on, to the end of time!"

And on another occasion, to one who questioned him about the old rule of the teachers, that truth should be taught only to those of proved and tested fitness. he exclaimed impatiently, "Don't you see that the age for

esoteric interpretations is over? For good or for ill, that day is vanished, never to return. Truth, in the future, is to be open to the world!"

He would speak, with whimsical amusement, of attempts to offer to India religious ideas and organisations which were European-led, as a culminating effort in the long attempt to exploit one race for the good of another. But he never took such European leading seriously, in matters of religion.

Finally, there was no event in the history of his own people to which he returned more constantly than the great Charge of Ashoka to his missionaries, in the third century before Christ. "Remember", said the mighty Emperor to those who were to carry the Law to various countries, "Remember that everywhere you will find some root of faith and righteousness. *See that you foster this, and do not destroy*!" Ashoka had thus dreamt of the whole world, as federated by ideas,—ideas everywhere guided and permeated by the striving towards absolute truth and perfection of conduct. But this dream of Ashoka had had to contend with ancient difficulties of communication and transport, with half-known continents and vast diversity of races. The preliminary steps, therefore, in his world-federation, would necessarily take so long that the primal impulse of faith and energy might in the meantime be forgotten. It must have been from the consideration of this question that the Swami one day looked up,—as we all entered the mountain-pass that lies beyond the village of Kathgodam,—and exclaimed, breaking a long reverie, "Yes! The idea of the Buddhists was one for which only the modern world is ready! None before us had the opportunity of its realisation!"

XVIII

THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND HIS ATTITUDE TO BUDDHA

THE SANE MAN

Chief of intellectual passions with the Swami, was his reverence for Buddha. It was perhaps the historical authenticity of this Indian life that was the basis of the delight it roused in him. "We are sure of Buddha and Mohammed, alone amongst religious teachers," he was wont to say, "for they alone had the good fortune to possess enemies as well as friends!" Again and again he would return upon the note of perfect rationality in his hero. Buddha was to him not only the greatest of Aryans, but also "the one absolutely sane man" that the world had ever seen. How he had refused worship! Yet he drew no attention to the fact that it had been offered. 'Buddha,' he said, 'was not a man, but a realisation. Enter, all ye, into it! Here receive the key!'

He had been so untouched by the vulgar craving for wonders, that he coldly excommunicated the lad who had by a word brought down a jewelled cup from the top of a pole, in the presence of the crowd. Religion he said, had nothing to do with jugglery!

How vast had been the freedom and humility of the Blessed One! He attended the banquet of Ambapali the courtesan. Knowing that it would kill him, but desiring that his last act should be one of communion with the lowly, he received the food of the pariah, and afterwards sent a courteous message to his host, thanking him for the Great Deliverance. How calm! How masculine! Verily was he the bull in the herd and a moon amongst men!

And perfect as he was in reason, he was at least as

wondrous in compassion. To save the goats at Rajgir, he would have given his life. He had once offered himself up, to stay the hunger of a tigress. Out of five hundred lives renounced for others, had been distilled the pity that had made him Buddha.

There comes to us a touch of his humour across the ages when he tells the tale of the youth, sobbing out his love for one he has never seen, whose very name he does not know, and likens his plight to the iterations of humanity about God. He alone was able to free religion entirely from the argument of the supernatural, and yet make it as binding in its force, and as living in its appeal, as it had ever been. This was done by the power of his own great personality, and the impress it made on the men of his own generation.

THE GREAT FAREWELL

For some of us, one evening, the Swami sat reconstructing the story, as it must have appeared to Jasodhara, the wife of Buddha, and never have I heard the dry bones of history clothed with such fulness or convincingness of life. Hindu monk as he himself was, it seemed to Vivekananda natural enough that a strong personality should have what he conveniently described as "European ideas about marriage," and should insist, as did Buddha, on seeing and choosing his bride for himself. Each detail of the week of festivities and betrothal was dwelt on tenderly. Then came the picture of the two, long wedded, and the great night of farewell. The gods sang, "Awake! thou that art awakened! Arise! and help the world!" and the struggling prince returned again and again to the bedside of his sleeping wife. "What was the problem that vexed him? Why! It was *she* whom he was about to sacrifice for the world! *That* was the struggle! He cared nothing for himself!"

Then the victory, with its inevitable farewell, and the kiss, imprinted so gently on the foot of the princess that she never woke. "Have you never thought," said the

Swami, "of the hearts of the heroes? How they were great, great, great, and soft as butter?"

BUDDHA AND JASODHARA

It was seven years later, when the prince, now Buddha, returned to Kapilavastu, where Jasodhara had lived,—clad in the yellow cloth, eating only roots and fruits, sleeping in no bed, under no roof,—from the day he had left her, sharing the religious life also, in her woman's way. And he entered, and she took the hem of his garment, "as a wife should do," while he told, to her and to his son, the Truth.

But when he had ended, and would have departed to his garden, she turned, startled, to her son, and said "Quick! go and ask your father for your patrimony!"

And when the child asked "Mother, which is my father?" She disdained to give any answer, save "The lion that passes down the street, lo, he is thy father!"

And the lad, heir of the Sakya line, went, saying "Father, give me my inheritance!"

Three times he had to ask, before Buddha, turning to Ananda, said "Give it!" and the Gerrua cloth was thrown over the child.

Then, seeing Jasodhara, and realising that she, too, longed to be near her husband, the chief disciple said "May women enter the Order? Shall we give to her also the yellow cloth?"

And Buddha said "Can there be sex in knowledge? Have I ever said that a woman could not enter? But this, O Ananda, was for thee to ask!"

Thus Jasodhara also became a disciple. And *then* all the pent-up love and pity of those seven years, welled forth in the Jataka Birth-stories! For they were all for her! Five hundred times each had forgotten self. And now they would enter into perfection together.

"——Yes, yes, so it was! For Jasodhara and for Sita,

a hundred years would not have been enough to try their faith!"

"No! No!" mused the teller, after a pause, as he ended the tale, "Let us all own that we have passions still! Let each one say *'I* am not the ideal!' Let none ever venture to compare another with Him!"

STUDY OF BUDDHISM

During the years of our Master's boyhood at Dakshineshwar, the attention of the world had been much concentrated on the story of Buddhism. The restoration of the great shrine of Bodh-Gaya was carried out about this time* under the orders of the English Government, and the share taken in this work by Rajendra Lal Mitra, the Bengali scholar, kept Indian interest intense throughout the country. In 1879, moreover, the imagination even of the unlearned classes in English-speaking countries was deeply stirred, by the appearance of Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," said to be in many parts an almost literal translation from the "Buddha Charita" of Ashwa Ghosh. But the Swami was never satisfied with taking things at second-hand, and in this too could not rest contented until in 1887 he, with his brethren, contrived to read together, not only the 'Lalita Vistara,' but also the great book of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, the 'Prajna Paramita,'† in the original.†† Their knowledge of Sanskrit was their key to the understanding of the daughter-language. The study of Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra's writings and of the 'Light of Asia', could never be a mere passing event in the Swami's life and the seed that thus fell on the sensitive

*The excavations round the great shrine were first commenced by the Burmese Government in 1874. The British Government took them in hand in 1879 and completed the work in 1884.

†*Lit.* That which leads one beyond intellect—to the realms of superconsciousness.

††These two books were then being published by the Asiatic Society, under the able editing of Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra. The original text appeared in Sanskrit characters and not in Pali, to help the general reader, who is familiar with the former but not with the latter.—*Saradananda.*

mind of Sri Ramakrishna's chief disciple, during the years of his discipleship, came to blossom the moment he was initiated into Sannyas, for his first act then was to hurry to Bodh-Gaya, and sit under the great tree, saying to himself "Is it possible that I breathe the aid He breathed? That I touch the earth He trod?"

At the end of his life again, similarly, he arrived at Bodh-Gaya, on the morning of his thirty-ninth birthday; and this journey, ending with a visit to Benares, was the last he ever made.

At some time in the years of his Indian wanderings, the Swami was allowed to touch the relics of Buddha, probably near the place where they were first discovered. And he was never afterwards able to refer to this, without some return of that passion of reverence and certitude which must then have overwhelmed him. Well might he exclaim, to someone who questioned him about the personal worship of the Avatars, "In truth, madam, had I lived in Judaea in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, I would have washed His feet, not with my tears, but with my heart's blood!"

"A Buddhist!" he said, to one who made a mistake about the name of his faith, "I am the servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha!" as if even the title of a believer would seem, to his veneration, too exalted to claim.

But it was not only the historic authenticity of the personality of Buddha that held him spell-bound. Another factor, at least as powerful, was the spectacle of the constant tallying of his own Master's life, lived before his eyes, with this world-attested story of twenty-five centuries before. In Buddha, he saw Ramakrishna Paramahamsa: in Ramakrishna, he saw Buddha.

THE NAME OF A DISCIPLE

In a flash this train of thought was revealed, one day when he was describing the scene of the death of Buddha.

He told how the blanket had been spread for him beneath the tree, and how the Blessed One had lain down, "resting on his right side, like a lion," to die, when suddenly there came to him one who ran, for instruction. The disciples would have treated the man as an intruder, maintaining peace at any cost about their Master's death-bed, but the Blessed One overheard, and saying "No, no! He who was sent* is ever ready," he raised himself on his elbow, and taught. This happened four times, and then, and then only, Buddha held himself free to die. "But first he spoke to reprove Ananda for weeping. The Buddha was not a person," he said, "but a realisation, and to that, anyone of them might attain. And with his last breath he forbade them to worship any."

The immortal story went on to its end. But to one who listened, the most significant moment had been that in which the teller paused,—at his own words "raised himself on his ellbow and taught,"—and said, in brief parenthesis, "*I* saw this, you know, in the case of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa!" And there rose before the mind the story of one, destined to learn from that Teacher, who had travelled a hundred miles, and arived at Cossipore† only when he lay dying. Here also the disciples would have refused admission, but Sri Ramakrishna intervened, insisting on receiving the newcomer, and teaching him.

THE TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

The Swami was always deeply preoccupied with the historic and philosophic significance of Buddhistic doctrine. Sudden references and abrupt allusions would show that his thoughts were constantly with it. " 'Form, feeling, sensation, motion and knowledge are the five categories,' " he quoted one day, from Buddha's teachings,†† " 'in perpetual

* *Lit. The Tathagata.* "A word," explained the Swami "which is very like your 'Messiah.' "

†Sri Ramakrishna entered into *Mahasamadhi* at the garden house of Krishna Gopal Ghosh in Cossipore, 1886.

††*Vide* Vinaya Pitaka, Part I, Sacred Books of the East Series.

flux and fusion. And in these lies Maya. Of any one wave nothing can be predicated, for it *is not.* It but was, and is gone. *Know, O Man, thou art the sea!'* Ah, this was Kapila's philosophy," he went on, "but his great Disciple brought the heart to make it live!"

And then, as the accents of that Disciple himself broke upon the inner ear, he paused a moment, and fell back on the deathless charge of the Dhammapada to the soul:

"Go forward without a path!
Fearing nothing, caring for nothing,
Wander alone, like the rhinoceros!
"Even as the lion, not trembling at noises,
Even as the wind, not caught in a net,
Even as the lotus-leaf, unstained by the water,
Do thou wander alone, like the rhinoceros!"

"Can you *imagine* what their strength was?" he said one day, as he dwelt on the picture of the First Council, and the dispute as to the President. "One said, it should be Ananda, because he had loved Him most. But someone else stepped forward, and said no! for Ananda had been guilty of weeping at the death-bed. And so he was passed over!"

NO COMPROMISE

"But Buddha," he went on, "made the fatal mistake of thinking that the whole world could be lifted to the height of the Upanishads. And self-interest spoiled all. Krishna was wiser, because He was more politic. But Buddha would have no compromise. The world before now has seen even the Avatar ruined by compromise, tortured to death for want of recognition, and lost. But Buddha would have been worshipped as God in his own lifetime, all over Asia, for a moment's compromise. And his reply was only 'Buddhahood is an achievement, not a person!' Verily was He the only man in the world who was ever quite sane, the only sane man ever born!"

Indian clearness of thought spoke in the Swami's contempt for our Christian leaning towards the worship of suffering. People had told him in the West that the greatness of Buddha would have been more appealing, had he been crucified! This he had no hesitation in stigmatising as "Roman brutality." "The lowest and most animal liking," he pointed out, "is for action. Therefore the world will always love the epic. Fortunately for India, however, she has never produced a Milton, with his 'hurled headlong down the steep abyss'! The whole of that were well exchanged for a couple of lines of Browning!" It had been this epic vigour of the story, in his opinion, that had appealed to the Roman. The crucifixion it was, that had carried Christianity over the Roman world. "Yes yes!" he reiterated, "You Western folk want *action*! You cannot yet perceive the poetry of every common little incident in life! What beauty could be greater than that of the story of the young mother, coming to Buddha with her dead boy? Or the incident of the goats? You see the Great Renunciation was not new in India! Gautama was the son of a petty chieftain. As much had been left many times before. But *after Nirvana,* look at the poetry!"

THE SONG OF THE COWHERD

*"It is a wet night, and he comes to the cowherd's hut and gathers in to the wall under the dripping eaves. The rain is pouring down, and the wind rising.

"Within, the cowherd catches a glimpse of a face, through the window, and thinks 'Ha, ha! Yellow Garb! stay there! It's good enough for you!' And then he begins to sing.

'My cattle are housed, and the fire burns bright. My wife is safe and my babes sleep sweet! Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight!'

*The Swami was here making a rough paraphrase, from memory, of Rhys David's metrical rendering of the Dhaniya Sutta, from the Sutta Nipata, in Fausbo'l's translation of the Dhammapada. See Rhys David's American Lectures.

"And the Buddha answers from without, 'My mind is controlled. My senses are all gathered in. My heart is firm. Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight!'

"Again the cowherd—'The fields are reaped, and the hay is all fast in the barn. The stream is full, and, the roads are firm. Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight.'

"And so it goes on, till at last the cowherd rises, in contrition and wonder, and becomes a disciple.

THE BARBER'S STORY

"Or what could be more beautiful than the Barber's story?

*'The Blessed One passed by my house,
my house—the Barber's!
'I ran, but He turned and awaited me.
Awaited *me*—the Barber!
'I said, 'May I speak, O Lord, with thee?'
And He said 'Yes!'
'Yes!' to *me*—the Barber!
'And I said 'Is Nirvana for such as I?'
And He said 'Yes!'
Even for *me*—the Barber!
'And I said 'May I follow after Thee!'
And He said 'Oh yes!'
Even *I*—the Barber!
'And I said 'May I stay, O Lord, near Thee?'
And He said 'Thou mayest!'
Even to *me*—the poor Barber!'"

He was epitomising the history of Buddhism one day, with its three cycles—five hundred years of law, five hund-

*The original form of this anecdote, as it appeared in the Buddhist texts in old times, under the name of Upali Prichcha (The Questions of Upali, the Barber) has been lost; but the fact that there was such a writing in existence, is known from its mention in other Buddhist books *e.g.* The Vinaya Pitaka.

red of images, and five hundred of Tantras,—when suddenly he broke off, to say, "You must not imagine, that there was ever a religion in India called Buddhism, with temples and priests of its own order! Nothing of the sort! The idea was always within Hinduism. Only the influence of Buddha was paramount at one time, and made the nation monastic." And the truth of the view so expressed can only, as I believe, become increasingly apparent to scholars, with time and study. According to it, Buddhism formed complete churches only in the circle of missionary countries, of which Kashmir was one. And an interesting morsel of history dwelt on by the Swami, was that of the adoption of the Indian apostolate in that country, with its inevitable deposition of the local *Nags*, or mysterious serpents living beneath the springs, from their position of deities. Strange to say, a terrible winter followed their disestablishment, and the terrified people hastened to make a compromise between the new truth and the old superstition, by reinstating the *Nags*, as saints, or minor divinities of the new faith,—a piece of human nature not without parallels elsewhere!

RE-INCARNATION—AN ILLUSION

One of the great contrasts between Buddhism and the Mother-church lies in the fact that the Hindu believes in the accumulation of Karma by a single ego, through repeated incarnations, while Buddhism teaches that this seeming identity is but illusory and impermanent. It is in truth another soul which inherits what we have amassed for it, and proceeds, out of our experience, to the sowing of fresh seed. On the merits of these rival theories, the Swami would often sit and ponder. By those to whom, as to him, the great life of superconsciousness has ever opened, as also in a lesser degree to those who have only dwelt in its shadow, the condition of the embodied spirit is seen as an ever-fretting limitation. The encaged soul beats wings of rebellion ceaselessly, against the prisoning

bars of the body, seeing outside and beyond them that existence of pure ideas, of concentrated emotion, of changeless bliss and unshadowed light, which is its ideal and its goal. To these, then, the body is a veil and a barrier, instead of a means to mutual communing. Pleasure and pain are but the Primal Light seen through the prism of personal consciousness. The one longing is to rise above them both, and find That, white, undivided, radiant. It was this train of feeling that expressed itself now and then in our Master's utterances of impatience at current conceptions, as when he broke out with the words "Why, one life in the body is like a million years of confinement, and they want to make up the memory of many lives! Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof!" Yet this question, of the relation to one another of the different personalities in a single long chain of experience, never failed to interest him. The doctrine of re-incarnation was never treated by him as an article of faith. To himself personally, it was 'a scientific speculation' merely, but of a deeply satisfying kind. He would always bring it forward, in opposition to our Western educational doctrine that all knowledge begins with the senses, pointing out, on his side, that this beginning of knowledge is often lost in the remote past of the given person. Yet when all had been said, the question still remained whether in the end Buddhism would not be proved philosophically right. Was not the whole notion of continuous identity illusory, to give way, at the last, to the final perception that the many were all unreal, and the One alone Real? "Yes!" he exclaimed one day, after long thought in silence, "Buddhism must be right! Re-incarnation is only a mirage! But this vision is to be reached, by the path of Adwaita alone!"

BUDDHISM AND ADWAITA

Perhaps it gave him pleasure, thus to play off Shankaracharya against Buddha, as it were, by calling in Adwaita

to the aid of Buddhism. Perhaps it was the unification of history involved, that so delighted him ; since the one idea was thus shown to be imperfect, apart from the other. "The heart of Buddha and the intellect of Shankaracharya" was always his definition of the highest possibility of humanity. In this vein was the attention he gave to the argument of a certain Western woman, against the Buddhistic view of Karma. The extraordinary sense of social responsibility involved in that rendering,* had escaped this particular mind. "I find," she said, "no motive for doing good deeds, of which someone else, and not I, will reap the fruit!"

The Swami, who was himself quite incapable of thinking in this way, was greatly struck by the remark, and a day or two later said to someone near him—"That was a very impressive point that was made the other day, that there can be no reason for doing good to people, if not they, but others, are to gather the fruit of our efforts!"

"But that was not the argument!" ungraciously answered the person addressed. "The point was that someone else than myself would reap the merit of my deed!"

"I know, I know," he replied quietly, "but our friend would have done greater justice to her own idea, if she had put it in this other way. Let us suppose it to stand, that we are deceived in doing service to those who can never receive that service. Don't you see that there is but one reply—the theory of Adwaita? For we are all one!"

THE MODERN HINDU MIND

Had he realised that the distinction between the mediæval and modern Hindu minds lay precisely here, that in the modern idea of India there would always be a place accorded to Buddhism and Buddha? Had he told him-

*There is surely a sense in which the motive for doing right is much strengthened if we are to feel that another, and not oneself, will bear the punishment for our sin. We may compare with this our own sense of responsibility for the property, children, or honour of another.

self that the Mahabharata and Ramayana, which had dominated Indian education since the Guptas, were henceforth to be supplemented, in the popular mind, by the history of the Ashokan and Pre-Ashokan periods? Had he thought of the vast significance to Asia of such a generalisation, of the new life to be poured from Hinduism into the veins of Buddhist countries, and of the vigour and strength to be gained by India herself, from the self-recognition of the Mother-church, feeding with knowledge the daughter-nations? However this be, we must never forget that it was in *Hinduism* that he saw the keystone of the arch of the two faiths.

HINDUISM ALL-INCLUSIVE

It was this mother, and not her daughter, that he found all-inclusive. Great and beloved Mother-church as she is, she has room to all time for the glorious form of the first and most lion-hearted of all her Avatars. She has place for his orders; understanding and reverence for his teachings; mother-love for his flock; and sympathy and welcome for the young he brought to her. But never will she say that truth is confined to his presentment; that salvation is only to be found through the monastic rule; that the path to perfection is one and one alone. That was perhaps the greatest of the Swami Vivekananda's pronouncements on Buddhism, in which he said: "The great point of contrast between Buddhism and Hinduism lies in the fact that Buddhism said 'Realise all this as illusion,' while Hinduism said 'Realise that within the illusion is the Real.' Of *how* this was to be done, Hinduism never presumed to enunciate any rigid law. The Buddhist command could only be carried out through monasticism; the Hindu might be fulfilled through any state of life. All alike were roads to the One Real. One of the highest and greatest expressions of the Faith is put into the mouth of a butcher, preaching, by the orders of a married woman, to a Sannyasin.

Thus Buddhism became the religion of a monastic order, but Hinduism, in spite of its exaltation of monasticism, remains ever the religion of faithfulness to daily duty, whatever it be, as the path by which man may attain to God."

XIX

THE SWAMI'S ESTIMATE OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY

Some of the deepest convictions of our lives are gathered from data which, in their very nature, can influence no one but ourselves. The instantaneous estimate of a motive or a personality, for instance, cannot be communicated, in its vividness, to any other, yet remains irresistible to the mind that makes it. It may be either true or false, that is to say, it may be based on a subtle species of observation, possible only to a few; or it may be only a vagrant impulse of emotion. Be this as it may, the strong subjective impression will colour much of the subsequent thought of him who has experienced it, and will appear to others as wisdom or caprice, according to its good or ill-luck, in coinciding with fact. In the same way, if, for the sake of the argument, we grant the truth of the theory of re-incarnation, it immediately becomes conceivable that some minds may enjoy occasional access within themselves to stores of subconscious memory, in which others have no share. If so, it is just possible that the results of such an *excursus* might furnish clues of some value, even though the difference between it and pure imagination could only be appreciated by the exploring mind itself.

SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES

Some such train of thought is necessary, if one is to visualise no less than three striking subjective experiences, which exerted an undoubted influence over my Master's mind and thought. Chief of these probably, was that vision of an old man on the banks of the Indus, chanting Vedic Riks, from which he had learnt his own peculiar

method of intoning Sanskrit—a method much closer to that of Gregorian plain-song than is the ordinary singing of the Vedas. In this, he always believed himself to have recovered the musical cadences of the Aryan ancestors. He found something remarkably sympathetic to this mode in the poetry of Shankaracharya, and this fact he expressed, by saying that that master must have had a vision like his own, in which he had caught "the rhythm of the Vedas."*

A VISION OF BUDDHA

Another similar experience had come to him, when he was quite young. It was in the days of his discipleship at Dakshineshwar. He was seated at home, in the little room that formed his study, meditating, when suddenly there appeared before him a man tall and largely built, in whose face was a calm so deep and so established, that it seemed to the lad, looking up at him, as if both pain and pleasure had been forgotten during infinite time. The devotee rose from his seat, and prostrated himself before his visitant: then he stood still, lost in an awestruck gaze. Suddenly it seemed as if the form before him were about to speak. But at this, a fit of terror overcame the boy, and without waiting to hear, he slipped quietly out of the room, and closed the door behind him! This was the vision to which he had referred, when he spoke of the entrance of Buddha into his room, in his youth. "And I fell at his feet, for I knew it was the Lord Himself." Nor would it be easy to measure how much of the throbbing energy of his feeling about Buddha,—the conviction of his overwhelming

*The Swami Saradananda says that this vision occurred about two years after Sri Ramakrishna had passed away, probably in January, 1888. The passage which he heard was that Salutation to Gayatri which begins "O come, Thou Effulgent!"

आयाहि वरदे देवि त्र्यक्षरे ब्रह्मवादिनि।
गायत्रिच्छन्दसां मातर्ब्रह्मयोनि नमोऽस्तुते॥

It is a great happiness to know that the Swami Abhedananda has learnt and can reproduce this Sanskrit intoning of the Swami Vivekananda.

'sanity,' the realisation of his infinite sacrifice and compassion,—was born of that hour in his boyhood, when he had felt that He stood revealed before him.

STUDY OF WESTERN FAITHS

The third and last of these determining visions, in so far, at least, as is known to those about him—occurred to the Swami on his way home to India, in January of the year 1897. One gathers that during his travels in Catholic Europe, he had been startled, like others before him, to find the identity of Christianity with Hinduism in a thousand points of familiar details. The Blessed Sacrament appeared to him to be only an elaboration of the Vedic Prasadam. The priestly tonsure reminded him of the shaven head of the Indian monk; and when he came across a picture of Justinian receiving the Law from two shaven monks, he felt that he had found the origin of the tonsure. He could not but remember that even before Buddhism, India had had monks and nuns, and that Europe had taken her orders from the Thebaid. Hindu ritual had its lights, its incense, and its music. Even the sign of the cross, as he saw it practised, reminded him of the touching of different parts of the body, in certain kinds of meditation. And the culmination of this series of observations was reached, when he entered some cathedral, and found it furnished with an insufficient number of chairs, and no pews. Then, at last, he was really at home. Henceforth he could not believe that Christianity was foreign.

Another train of thought that may have prepared him, unconsciously, for the dream I am about to recount, lay in the fact that he had, in America, had a Jewish disciple, by whom he had been introduced into orthodox Jewish society, and led to the more or less careful study of the Talmud. Thus he had a clearer sense of the background of thought, against which S. Paul stood forth, than is at all common.

Still an added factor in his study of Christianity, that is worth remembering, was his familiarity, in America, with the movement known as Christian Science. In examining the birth of religions, he said once, afterwards, that there were three elements of which he thought we must always take account,—doctrine, ritual, and a third, of the nature of magic, or miracle, which most commonly appeared as a movement of healing. The grounds for his inclusion of the last member of this triad, I find partly in his observation of Christian Science and the allied movements—coupled as this would be with his own conviction that we are now on the eve of a great new synthesis in religion—and partly in his vision itself, which was stamped so vividly on his brain-fibre as to stand in his memory amongst actual living experiences.

HIS DREAM

It was night, and the ship on which he had embarked at Naples, was still on her way to Port Said, when he had this dream. An old and bearded man appeared before him, saying "Observe well this place that I show to you. You are now in the island of Crete. This is the land in which Christianity began." In support of this origin of Christianity, the speaker gave two words—one of which was *Therapeutæ*—and showed both to be derived direct from Sanskrit roots. The Swami frequently spoke of this dream in afteryears, and always gave the two etymologies; but the other seems* nevertheless, to be lost, beyond recovery. Of *theraputæ,* the meaning advanced was, *sons of the theras,* from *thera,* an elder amongst the Buddhist monks, and *putra,* the Sanskrit word for *son.* "The proofs are all here," added the old man, pointing to the ground, "Dig, and you will find!"

The Swami woke, feeling that he had had no common dream and tumbled out on deck, to take the air. As he

*It is my own belief that the second word was *Essene.* But alas, I cannot remember the Sanskritic derivation!—*N.*

did so, he met a ship's officer, turning in from his watch. 'What is the time?' he asked him.

"Midnight," was the answer.

"And where are we?"

"Just fifty miles off Crete!"

This unexpected coincidence startled the Swami, lending inevitable emphasis to the dream itself. The experience now seemed to precipitate elements, that without it, would have lain in his mind meaningless and unrelated. He confessed afterwards that up to this time it had never occurred to him to doubt the historic personality of Christ, and that after this, he could never rely upon it. He understood all at once that it was S. Paul alone of whom we could be sure. He saw the meaning of the fact that the Acts of the Apostles was an older record than the Gospels. And he divined that the teaching of Jesus might have originated with the Rabbi Hillel, while the ancient sect of the Nazarenes might have contributed the name and the person, with its beautiful sayings, reverberating out of some unknown antiquity.*

IDEALS AS IDEALS

But while his vision thus exercised an undeniable influence over his own mind, he would have thought it insanity to offer it as evidence to any other. The function of such an experience, if admitted at all, was to his thinking, subjective alone. He might be led by it to doubt the historic character of Jesus of Nazareth; but he never referred to Crete as the probable birth-place of Christianity. That would be an hypothesis for secular scholarship alone, to prove or disprove. The admitted historic spectacle of the meeting of Indian and Egyptian elements at Alexandria was the only geographical factor of which he ever spoke.

*Or, he thought perhaps that the "beautiful sayings" of Jesus might really have been uttered by Buddha and the tale told in the Gospels, opening thus only another vista for the seeing of Him.—*N.*

Nor did this intellectual dubiety in any way dim the brightness of his love for the Son of Mary. To Hindu thinking, it is the perfection of the ideal, as ideal, that matters, and not the truth of its setting in space and time. To the Swami it was only natural, therefore, to refuse, out of reverence, to give his blessing to a picture of the Sistine Madonna, touching the feet of the Divine child, instead; or to say, in answer to an enquirer, "Had I lived in Palestine, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, I would have washed His feet, not with my tears, but with my heart's blood!" In this, moreover, he had the explicit sanction of Sri Ramakrishna, whom he had consulted anxiously, in his boyhood, on a similar question, to be answered, "Do you not think that they who could create such things must themselves have *been* the ideal that they held up for worship?"

XX

WOMAN AND THE PEOPLE

The Temple of Dakshineshwar was built by the wealthy Rani Rashmani, a woman of the Koiburto caste, and in the year 1853, Sri Ramakrishna took up his residence there, as one of the Brahmins attached to its service.

These were facts which had impressed the mind of Vivekananda even more deeply, perhaps, than he himself ever knew. A woman of the people had been, in a sense, the mother of that whole movement of which all the disciples of his Master formed parts. Humanly speaking, without the Temple of Dakshineshwar there had been no Ramakrishna, without Ramakrishna no Vivekananda, and without Vivekananda, no Western Mission. The whole story rested on the building, erected on the Ganges side, a few miles above Calcutta, just before the middle of the nineteenth century. And that was the outcome of the devotion of a rich woman of the lower castes,—a thing that under a purely Hindu government, bound to the maintenance of Brahmin supremacy, would never have been possible, as the Swami himself was not slow to point out. From this he inferred the importance of the non-cognisance of caste, by centralised governments in India.

A STRONG WOMAN

Rani Rashmani, in her time, was a woman of heroic mould. The story is still told, of how she defended the fisher-folk of Calcutta against wrongful taxation, by inducing her husband to pay the enormous sum demanded, and then insist on closing the river against the heavy traffic of the foreigners. She fought a like good fight over the right of her household to carry the images of the gods

along the roads she owned, on the lordly Maidan, or Park. If the English objected to the religion of the Indian people, she said in effect, it was a small matter to build walls at the disputed points, to right and left of the procession-path. And this was done, with the result of breaking the continuity of the grand pleasure-drive, the Rotten Row of Calcutta. Early in her widowhood, she had to bring all her wits to bear on her bankers, in order to get into her own hands the heavy balance which she required for working-capital. This she accomplished, however, with the greatest tact and adroitness, and was mistress of her own affairs thenceforth. Later, a great law-suit, in which the ready-wit of her replies through counsel carried all before her, became a household word in Hindu Calcutta.

The husband of Rani Rashmani's daughter, "Mathur Babu" as he was called, bears a name that figures largely in the early history of Sri Ramakrishna. It was he who protected the great devotee, when all around held him to be religion-mad. It was he who continued him in the enjoyment of residence and allowances without permitting duties to be demanded of him. In these things, Mathur Babu acted as the representative of his wife's mother. Rani Rashmani had recognised the religious genius of Sri Ramakrishna, from the beginning, and proved unfaltering in her adhesion to that first insight.

SPRUNG OF THE PEOPLE

And yet, when Ramakrishna, as the young Brahmin of Kamarpukur, had first come to Dakshineshwar, so orthodox had he been that he could not tolerate the idea of a temple, built and endowed by a low-caste woman. As the younger brother of the priest-in-charge, he had to assist, hour after hour, in the religious ceremonies of the opening day. But he would eat none of the Prasadam. And late at night, it is said, when all was over, and the guests had dispersed, he broke his fast for the first time, with a handful of fried lentils bought in the bazaar.

Surely this fact deepens the significance of the position which he subsequently occupied in the Temple-garden. It was by no oversight that he became the honoured guest and dependent of the Koiburto Rani. We are justified in believing that when at last he found his mission, he recognised it as subversive, rather than corroborative, of the rigid conservatism to which his childhood in the villages had accustomed him. And we may hold that his whole life declares the conviction of the equal religious importance of all men, whatever their individual rank in the social army.

Our Master, at any rate, regarded the Order to which he belonged as one whose lot was cast for all time with the cause of Woman and the People. This was the cry that rose to his lips instinctively, when he dictated to the phonograph in America, the message that he would send to the Raja of Khetri. It was the one thought, too, with which he would turn to the disciple at his side, whenever he felt himself nearer than usual to death, in a foreign country, alone, "Never forget!" he would then say, "the word is, 'Woman and the People!'"

It is of course in moments of the formation of groups that the intensity of social power is at its greatest, and the Swami brooded much over the fact that the *'formed'* could no longer give life or inspiration. 'Formed' and 'dead', with him, were synonyms. A social formation that had become fixed, was like a tree that had ceased to grow. Only a false sentimentality (and sentimentality was, in his eyes, selfishness, 'the overflow of the senses') could cause us to return upon it, with expectation.

ON CASTE

Caste was an institution that he was always studying. He rarely criticised, he constantly investigated it. As an inevitable phenomenon of all human life, he could not look upon it as if it had been peculiar to Hinduism. It

was on seeing an Englishman hesitate to admit, amongst gentlemen, that he had once killed cattle in Mysore, that the Swami exclaimed, "The opinion of his caste is the last and finest restraint that holds a man!" And with a few quick strokes he created the picture of the difference between those standards which differentiate the law-abiding from the criminal, or the pious from the unbelieving, on the one hand, and on the other, those finer, more constructive moral ideals, that inspire us to strive for the respect of the smaller number of human beings whom we regard as our peers.

THE TRUE WOMAN

But remarks like this were no indication of partisanship. It was for the monk to witness life, not to take sides in it. He ignored all the proposals that reached him, which would have pledged him to one party or another, as its leader. Only let Woman and the People achieve education! All further questions of their fate, they would themselves be competent to settle. This was his view of freedom, and for this he lived. As to what form that education should take, he knew enough to understand that but little was as yet determined. With all his reverence for individuality, he had a horror of what he called the crime of the unfaithful widow. "Better anything than that!" he said, and felt. The white un-bordered Sari of the lonely life was to him the symbol of all that was sacred and true. Naturally then, he could not think of any system of schooling which was out of touch with these things, as 'education'. The frivolous, the luxurious, and the denationalised, however splendid in appearance, was to his thinking not educated, but rather degraded. A modernised Indian woman, on the other hand, in whom he saw the old-time intensity of trustful and devoted companionship to the husband, with the old-time loyalty to the wedded kindred, was still, to him, "the ideal Hindu wife." True

womanhood, like true monkhood, was no matter of mere externals. And unless it held and developed the spirit of true womanhood, there could be no education of woman worthy of the name.

He was always watching for chance indications of the future type. A certain growth of individualism was inevitable, and must necessarily bring later marriage, and perhaps a measure of personal choice, in its train. Probably this, more than anything else, would tend to do away with the problems created by child-widowhood. At the same time, it was not to be forgotten that early marriage had, in its time, been a deliberate attempt on the part of the community to avoid certain other evils which they had regarded as incidental to its postponement.

He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future, entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science, women must learn: but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality. He saw clearly enough that the ideal education would be one that should exercise the smallest possible influence for direct change on the social body as a whole. It would be that which should best enable every woman, in time to come, to resume into herself the greatness of all the women of the Indian past.

Each separate inspiration of days gone by had done its work. The Rajput story teemed with the strength and courage of the national womanhood. But the glowing metal must flow into new moulds. Ahalya Bai Rani had been perhaps the greatest woman who ever lived. An Indian Sadhu, who had come across her public works in all parts of the country, would naturally think so. Yet the greatness of the future, while including hers, would be no exact repetition of it. The mother's heart, in the women of the dawning age, must be conjoined with the hero's will. The fire on the Vedic altar, out of which arose Savitri, with her sacred calm and freedom, was ever the ideal background. But with this woman must unite a softness and sweetness, as of the south winds themselves.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Women must rise in capacity, not fall. In all his plans for a widows' home, or a girls' school and college, there were great green spaces. Physical exercise, and gardening, and the care of animals, must form part of the life lived there. Religion, and an intensity of aspiration more frequent in the cloister than outside it, were to be heart and background of this new departure. And such schools, when the winter was over, must transform themselves into pilgrimages, and study half the year in the Himalayas. Thus a race of women would be created, who should be nothing less than "Bashi-Bazouks of religion,"* and *they* should work out the problem for women. No home, save in their work ; no ties, save of religion ; no love, but that for Guru, and people, and motherland. Something after this sort was his dream.

THE EDUCATED WOMAN

He saw plainly enough that what was wanted was a race of women-educators, and this was how he contemplated making them. Strength, strength, strength was the one quality he called for, in woman as in man. But how sterm was his discrimination of what constituted strength! Neither self-advertisement nor over-emotion roused his admiration. His mind was too full of the grand old types of silence and sweetness and steadiness to be attracted by any form of mere display. At the same time, woman had as large an inheritance as man, in all the thought and knowledge that formed the peculiar gift of the age to India. There could be no sex in truth.

*The Bashi-Bazouks were the body-guard of the Caliph. For many centuries, the members of the Turkish Guard consisted of soldiers who had been kidnapped in early childhood from all races and countries, and brought up in Islam. Their religion was thus their Passion, and the service of their land and sovereign, their only bond of union. They were renowned throughout Europe for their fierceness and courage. Their power was broken in Egypt by Napoleon.

He would never tolerate any scheme of life and polity that tended to bind tighter on mind and soul the fetters of the body. The greater the individual, the more would she transcend the limitations of femininity in mind and charcter; and the more was such transcendence to be expected and admired.

He looked, naturally enough, to widows as a class, to provide the first generation of abbess-like educators. But in this respect, as in all others, he made no definite plans. In his own words, he only said "Awake! Awake! Plans grow and work themselves." Yet he would have welcomed material, wherever it might have come from. He knew of no reason why it should be impossible to any woman—by strong and simple character and intellect, and uprightness of living—to make herself a vehicle of the highest ideals. Even burdens of the conscience must be held redeemable by sincerity. "All great ends must be freely pursued," says a recent writer on feminist movements, and the Swami had no fear of freedom, and no distrust of Indian womanhood. But the growth of freedom of which he dreamt, would be no fruit of agitation, clamorous and iconoclastic. It would be indirect, silent, and organic. Beginning with a loyal acceptance of the standards of society, women would more and more, as they advanced in achievement, learn to understand both the commands and the opportunities, which characterised the national life. By fulfilling those demands, and availing themselves to the full of their opportunities, they would grow more Indian than ever before, even while they entered on a grandeur of development, of which the past had never dreamt.

NATIONAL CONTINUITY

In nothing, perhaps, did the personal freedom of Vivekananda show itself more plainly than in his grasp of the continuity of the national life. The new form was always, to him, sanctified by the old consecration. To

draw pictures of the goddess Saraswati was, according to him, "to worship her." To study the science of medicine was "to be down on one's knees, praying against the demons of disease and filth." The old Bhakti of the cow showed how receptive was the spirit of Hindu society of new and scientific methods of dairy-farming, and the pasturing and care of animals. The training of the intellect to its highest perfection, he believed essential to the power of religious concentration. Study was Tapasya, and Hindu meditativeness an aid to scientific insight. All work was a form of renunciation. Love, even of home and family, was always capable of being wrought into a grander and more universal passion.

He delighted to point out that to the Hindu all written words were sacred, English and Persian to the full as much as Sanskrit. But he hated the tinkling sound of foreign manners and foreign accomplishments. He could not bear to listen to a criticism that concerned itself merely with the readjustment of externals. When comparisons had to be made, he dealt always with the ideal as differently expressed by different societies and measured either failure or achievement whether in modern or mediæval, by this central aim.

Above all, his conception of love was one that admitted of no differentiation between the speaker and him of whom he spoke. To refer to others as "they" was already, to his ears, almost hatred. He always united himself with the criticised or the condemned. Those about him realised that if the universe had indeed been resolvable into an ultimate formula of dualism, his own part would have been chosen, not with Michael the Archangel, but with him, eternally defeated, over whom he triumphed. And this was with him no expression of an inner conviction that he could teach or aid. It was simply the passionate determination to *share* the hardest lot to which any might be driven without escape, to defy the powers of the universe, if need be, by himself suffering the utmost to

which any single consciousness anywhere might find itself irretrievably doomed.

THE BASIS OF SERVICE

Well might he point out, as he does in certain of his published letters, that even compassion was not motive enough, on which to build the service of others. He would have no such patronage. Compassion, he said, was that which served others with the idea that they were Jivas, souls: love, on the contrary, regarded them as the Atman, the very Self. Love, therefore, was worship, and this worship the vision of God. "For the Adwaitin, therefore the ONLY motive is love." There was no privilege to be compared with the trust of a great service. "It is the Saviour," he says, in one of his letters, "who should go on his way rejoicing; not the saved!" As priests purifying themselves for the service of the altar, with eager awe, and the will to endure all, and yet be steadfast, must they come forward, who were chosen for the sacred task of woman's education. He remembered, and often repeated the words of Mataji Maharani, the Mahratta woman who founded in Calcutta, the Mahakali Pathshala. "Swamiji!" she said, pointing to the little girls whom she taught, "I have no help. But these blessed ones I worship, and they will take me to salvation!"

EDUCATION FOR ALL

A like intensity of chivalry spoke, in his attitude towards those whom he called "the People." Education and knowledge were the right of these, as much as of their brothers, higher in the social scale. Having this, they would work out their own destiny, freely, from within. In this view of the task before him, the Swami was only continuing the tradition of all the great Indian teachers, from Buddha downwards. In the age when the philosophy of the Upanishads had been the exclusive privilege of the Aryans, the Tathagata arose, and taught to all alike the

Perfect Way, of Nirvana by Renunciation. In a place and a period where the initiation of the great Masters was the cherished culture of the few, Ramanuja, from the tower of Conjeeveram, proclaimed the mystic text to all the pariahs. It is now the dawn of the modern age,—with its realisation of manhood by secular knowledge—in India. Naturally then, to Vivekananda the absorbing question was, how to give secular knowledge to the People.

He saw, of course, that the energy and co-operation of the whole nation was necessary, if material prosperity was ever to be brought back to India. And he knew well enough that the restoration of material prosperity was an imperative need. A God, he said, with his accustomed vigour, who could not in this life give a crust of bread, was not to be trusted in the next for the kingdom of heaven! He also felt, probably, that only by the spread of knowledge could the country as a whole be kept steadfast in its reverence for the greatness of its own inherited culture, intellectual and religious. In any case, new life could only be poured into the veins of the higher classes, by a great movement of forth-reaching to the democracy. He believed that the one thing to be renounced was any idea of birth as the charter of leadership. The sublimated common-sense that men call genius, was to the full as likely to occur in the small shop-keeper, or in the peasant taken from the plough, as in the Brahmin or the Kayastha. If the Kshatriya had had any monopoly of courage, where would Tantia Bhil have been? He believed that the whole of India was about to be thrown into the melting-pot, and that no man could say what new forms of power and greatness would be the result.

THE NEED OF THE VILLAGES

He saw plainly that the education of the Indian working-folk was properly the task of the Indian lettered classes, and of no others. The infinite danger that attended the

introduction of knowledge by foreign minds from foreign sources, was never for one moment hidden from him. This is the meaning of his constant plea, in his published correspondence, for the teaching of the villages, by wandering students, who would carry the magic lantern, the camera, and some means for simple chemical experiments. Again he begs for the inclusion of some secular instruction in the intercourse of the begging friars, with the humbler classes. All this, of course, would be little more than a support and attractive invitation, to the New Learning. For that learning itself every man would have to struggle, alone or in combination. But there can be no doubt that to bring home to a large population the idea that there *is* a world of thought and knowledge unattained by them, is the first step in the popularising of new culture. In such schemes, therefore, the Swami was emphatically right.

MEANS OF SERVICE

As befitted a religious teacher, however, the work that he himself initiated and consecrated was almost always some special service of the hungry or the sick. It was he who found the money that started the special sanitation missions, first undertaken by the Order, as a measure for plague-prevention, in 1899, and never since abandoned. Throughout his years in the West, he was seeking for workers "to devote themselves to the Indian pariahs," and nothing caused him such exultation in 1897 as to see his Brahmin disciples nursing low-caste patients through cholera. "We see again," he said, referring to this, "what happened before, in the days of Buddha." And those who knew him best, feel a peculiar reverence and affection for the little hospital in Benares, that was the last-born child of his love and pity.

But his heart was not less bound up in other undertakings, which, though less directly his, were more purely educational. The well-being of the various magazines in

which the Order was interested, and the industrial education carried on by the Orphanage at Murshidabad, were matters of the deepest import in his eyes. Under present circumstances in India, the magazine is often a kind of peripatetic school, college, and university, all in one. It has a marvellous degree of influence. It carries ideas on the one hand, and offers a means of self-expression on the other, and it was an instinctive perception of this educational value that made the Swami so eager about the fate of various papers conducted by his brethren and disciples. The same number of a periodical will sometimes combine the loftiest transcendental abstractions on one page with comparatively faltering secular speculations on the next, and in this affords an exact index to the popular mind of the Transition. The Swami himself said, referring to this paradox, "The Hindu's idea of the means of knowledge is meditation, and this serves him well, when the subject is mathematics. Unfortunately, however, his instinct would lead him to the same method in the case of geography, and not much geography comes that way!"

PROBLEMS OF THE SHUDRA

Vivekananda's passion of pity, however, did not concern itself with the Indian people only. True to his Oriental birth, he would always defend the *small* farmer or the *small* distributor, against those theorists who seem to consider that aggregations of business are justified in proportion to their size. He held that the age of humanity now dawning would occupy itself mainly with the problems of the working-folk, or as he expressed it, with the problems of the Shudra. When he first landed in the West, he was greatly attracted, as his letters show, by the apparent democracy of conditions there. Later, in 1900, he had a clearer view of the underlying selfishness of capital and the struggle for privilege, and confided to someone that Western life now looked to him "like hell."

At this riper stage of experience, he was inclined to believe that China had gone nearer to the ideal conception of human ethics than newer countries had ever done, or could do. Yet he never doubted that for man, the world over, the coming age would be "for the People." "We are to solve the problems of the Shudra," he said, one day, "but oh, through what tumults! through what tumults!" He spoke like one gazing direct into the future, and his voice had the ring of prophecy; but, though the listener waited, hoping eagerly for more, he only became silent, lapsing into deeper thought.

SALUTATION TO THE MOTHER

I have always believed that it was for the guiding and steadying of men through some such age of confusion and terror, that in our Master's life and that of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the worship of the Mother has sounded such a mighty Udbodhan. She it is who unites in Herself the extremes of experience. She shines through evil as through good. She alone is the Goal, whatever be the road. Whenever the Swami would chant Her salutation, one would hear, like the subdued music of some orchestra behind a single melody, this great chorus of the historic drama. "Thou art the welfare and happiness in the homes of the virtuous," he would recite, "*And* Thou art the misery and wretchedness, in those of the quarrelsome and wicked!" And then, as the mingling of oppressor and oppressed in a common hope and terror, as the trampling of armies, and turmoil of nations, grew louder and clearer to the mental ear, one would hear the thunder of the great Ascription rise above it all:

"Thou Mother of blessings,
Thou the Giver of desires,
Thou the Doer of all good,
To Thee our salutation.

Thee we salute, Thee we salute,
Thee we salute.

Thou terrible dark Night!
Thou the Night of Delusion!
Thou the Night of DEATH—
To THEE our salutation!
Thee we salute, Thee we salute,
Thee we salute."

XXI

HIS METHOD OF TRAINING A WESTERN WORKER

THE Swami had once asked Pavhari Baba of Gazipur, "What was the secret of success in work?" and had been answered, "To make the end the means, and the means the end."

This is a saying that one penetrates now and again for a moment at long intervals. But if it signifies that the whole energy of the worker should be concentrated on the means, as if these were the end, while that end itself is for the time being forgotten or ignored, then it may be only another way of preaching the great lesson of the Gita, "To action man has a right: he has no right to the fruits of action."

INDIAN FORMS

Our Master possessed, in a wonderful degree, the secret of inspiring his disciples to attempt this ideal. He had his own reasons—which every Hindu will perhaps understand—for feeling that a European who was to work on his behalf for India must do so in the Indian way. And in this demand, while he never confused essentials and non-essentials, he regarded no detail as too trivial to be important. To eat only of approved foods, and to do this with the fingers, to sit and sleep on the floor, to perform Hindu ceremonies, and bind oneself strictly by the feelings and observances of Hindu etiquette, were all, to his thinking, means of arriving at that Indian consciousness which would afterwards enable one to orientate oneself truly to the Indian aspects of larger questions. Even so trifling a matter as the use of lime-juice and powdered lentils, instead of soap, appeared to him worthy of thought and effort.

Even the caste feeling that seemed crude must be appreciated and assimilated. It was tacitly understood that the time might someday come, when one would be free of all these, even as he was free; but the emancipation won by going through an experience is very different from the blindness that ignores or despises!

The Swami was remarkable, however, in his power of imparting the ideal with a custom. To this day, one shudders at the impurity and roughness of blowing out a light; while to put on a Sari, and veil the head, is always to strive for the mood of passive sweetness and acceptance, rather than that of self-confident aggression. For in how far this symbolism of externals is a fact of common Indian perception, we are not, perhaps, quite prepared to understand. "Never neglect to lower it!" said the monk Sadananda to me once, of this particular garment. "Remember that in that white veil lies the half of saintliness!"

CANONS OF EDUCATION

In all this, one was led along the path that one knew already to be right. If the student was to solve any problem of Indian education, it was essential that there should first be experience of the humbler routine of teaching; and for this the supreme and essential qualification was to have looked at the world, even if only for a moment, through eyes of the taught. Every canon of educational science proclaims this fact. 'From known to unknown,' 'from simple to complex,' 'from concrete to abstract,' and the very term 'education' itself, are all words only, on the lips of those who can form no idea of the world as the pupil sees it, or the aims to which he would fain be aided to climb. To teach *against* the aspirations of the taught, is assuredly to court ill results instead of good.

What was startling in the Swami's discipline was his instinctive assumption that the Indian consciousness was built up on the thousand and one tiny details of Indian

daily life. Looking closer, one saw that this had been the method pursued by Sri Ramakrishna. Whenever he desired to apprehend a new idea, he had adopted the food, clothes, language, and general habits of those who held it. He had not merely attempted to approximate to them in the use of a few religious formulæ.

THE FREEDOM GIVEN

But Vivekananda was too great an educator to disregard the freedom of the disciple, even in such matters as these. The aim was revealed only little by little, and always on the basis of some attempt already made. It was true that he was perpetually testing purity of motive, always on his guard against the possible intrusion of self-interest, in himself or in others. "I trust no one," he said, "because I do not trust myself. How do I know what I may become, tomorrow?" But it was also true that it was not in his nature, as he said once, to interfere with liberty, even to prevent mistakes. It was for him to point out the source of an error, only when it had been committed.

During the first six months of 1899, I dined occasionally with people of various classes, both Indian and European, in Calcutta. This fact always caused the Swami uneasiness. He feared a revulsion, probably, against the extreme simplicity of orthodox Hindu life. Undoubtedly also he thought a strong reaction possible, in favour of the associations of one's birth. He had seen a great religious movement shattered in the West, by the petty social ambition of a woman of over-much refinement. Yet he never interfered with me in this matter, though a single word of authority would have been enough at any time to have ended it. Nor did he ever show his disapproval. He took an interest, on the contrary, in every experience that one brought to his notice. He would in a general way express his fear, or utter a grave warning, not at the time

understood, about 'loaves and fishes.' But seeing, perhaps, that there was a genuine need to form a concept of the whole synthesis of classes and interests in Modern India, he gave way completely to his disciple, and allowed the course of enquiry to pursue its own path.

It was only on the ship, during the voyage to England, that he fully expressed the ideal that was in him. "You must give up all visiting, and live in strict seclusion," he said one day, as he discussed the future of the women's work. "You have to set yourself to Hinduise your thoughts, yours needs, your conceptions, and your habits. Your life, internal and external, has to become all that an orthodox Hindu Brahmin Brahmacharini's ought to be. The method will come to you, if only you desire it sufficiently. But *you have to forget your own past, and to cause it to be forgotten. You have to lose even its memory*!"

Never was monk more passionately monastic than Vivekananda, for all his apparent ease and fearlessness. Yet here, in the case of a worker, he knew how to substitute for the walls of a convent, the Indian people and their life. This has sometimes appeared to me the greatest manifestation he gave, of his genius. "We shall speak to all men," he said once, "in terms of their own orthodoxy!" and went on to picture a branch of the Indian Orders in the English Church, wearing the yellow garb, going barefooted, practising the extreme of asceticism, and standing always for the supreme truth of the inter-relatedness of all religions.

HINDU ETIQUETTE

In the special case of the Indian consciousness, however, his ideal was by no means limited to a strenuous aspiration. Step by step, point by point, he gave, as details of Hindu etiquette, those instructions which it is customary in Europe to offer the religious novice. It was in this way that he laboured to overcome that restlessness and empha-

sis of Western manners, which appears to the Eastern mind so crude. The constant expression of feeling, whether of pain, admiration, or surprise, was to him shocking. It was not necessary to stigmatise it as irreligious, for it was ill-bred. The oriental expects of a man that he should feel, and keep his feeling to himself. Any constant pointing out of the curious or the beautiful appears to him an unwarrantable intrusion on the privacy and self-directedness of thought. Yet that the desired repose of manner is not conceived of as merely idle, is seen in the case of that sage who was asked by a certain king to tell him about God. "What is He like? What is He like?" And the saint replied, "All this time I was telling you, O king! For silence is His name!"

This was a point on which the Swami was exacting. He would impose on the European disciple long periods of severe restraint. "Struggle to realise yourself," he said on a certain occasion, "without a trace of emotion!"

Watching the fall of dead leaves once, in the stillness of an autumn evening, he did not deny that there was poetry in the sight, but he declared that mental excitement, roused by what was merely an event of the external sense-world, was childish and out of place. All Western people, he said, had to learn the great lesson, of holding experience and emotion apart. "Watch the fall of the leaves, but gather the sentiment of the sight from within, at some later time!"

This is neither more nor less than the conventual doctrine of recollectedness and peace, as known in Europe. Is it also a subtle method of evoking creative faculty? Does it point to a poetry which holds the world as a vast symbol, yet thrones the intellect high above the senses?

BE TRUE TO THE PEOPLE

Carrying the question out of the sphere of mere good-breeding, and mental discipline, and framing the same

truth again in terms of the spiritual life alone, the Swami would speak with horror of that bondage which shows itself in the quest of subtle metaphysical pleasures. In all idealism, he would say, lies the danger of idealising merely what we have reached. Such "covering of a corpse with flowers" would sooner or later mean, when realised in practice, the abandonment of the People, and the destruction of the work. Only they could be faithful who were beyond temptation, followers of the pure idea, regardless of self.

"Mind!" he said, as he talked of future methods, "No loaves and fishes! No glamour of the world! All this must be cut short. It must be rooted out. It is sentimentality,—the overflow of the senses. It comes to you in colour, sight, sound, and associations. Cut it off. Learn to hate it. It is utter poison!"

MONASTIC ORDERS

Thus the common routine of the Hindu home became eloquent, on the Swami's lips, of a world of deeper truths, characteristically apprehended by the Hindu mind. He himself had been interested, from his babyhood, in monastic organisation. He had once had a copy of the *Imitation*, in which there was a preface describing the monastery and the rule followed by Jean de Gerson, the supposed author, and this preface, to his imagination, had been the jewel of the book. Not contented with reading it over and over till he knew it off by heart, it filled the dreams of his boyhood; till with a kind of surprise he awoke, in middle age, to find himself, organising another monastic order, on the banks of the Ganges, and realised that the fascination of his childhood had been a foreshadowing of the future.

Yet it was not the conventualism of authority, or of the school, but that of the Hindu widow, following her rule freely, in the midst of the family, that he held up to a European disciple for a model. "An orthodox Hindu

Brahmin Brahmacharini" was his ideal for the woman of character, and no words can convey the delight with which his voice lingered over the phrase.

"Lay down the rules for your group, and formulate your ideas," he said once, dealing with this very point, "and put in a little universalism, if there is room for it. But remember that not more than half a dozen people in the whole world are ever at any one time ready for this! There must be room for sects, as well as for rising above sects. You will have to manufacture your own tools. Frame laws, but frame them in such a fashion that when people are ready to do without them, they can burst them asunder. Our originality lies in combining perfect freedom with perfect authority. This can be done, even in monasticism. For my own part, I always have an horizon."

He broke off here to follow another line of thought, which always interested him, and always appeared to him fruitful of applications. "Two different races," he said, "mix and fuse, and out of them rises one strong distinct type. This tries to save itself from admixture, and here you see the beginning of caste. Look at the apple. The best specimens have been produced by crossing, but once crossed, we try to preserve the variety intact."

THE VALUE OF TYPES

A few days afterwards, the same reflection came uppermost again, and he said with great earnestness, "A strong and distinct type is always the physical basis of the horizon. It is all very well to talk of universalism, but the world will not be ready for that for millions of years!"

"Remember!" he said again, "if you want to know what a ship is like, the ship has to be specified as it is,—its length, breadth, shape, and material. And to understand a nation, we must do the same. India *is* idolatrous. You must help her *as she is*. Those who have left her can do nothing for her!"

The Swami felt that there was no task before India which could compare in importance with that of woman's education. His own life had had two definite personal purposes, of which one had been the establishment of a home for the Order of Ramakrishna, while the other was the initiation of some endeavour towards the education of woman. With five hundred men, he would say, the conquest of India might take fifty years: with as many women, not more than a few weeks.

In gathering widows and orphans to be trained, he was of opinion that the limitations of birth must be steadfastly ignored. But it was essential to success that those who were chosen should be young and unformed. "Birth is nothing!" he would say, "Environment is everything!" But above all else, he felt that impatience was inexcusable. If in twelve years any result were visible, this fact would constitute a great success. The task was one that might well take seventy years to accomplish.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

For hours he would sit and talk of details, building castles in the air of an ideal school, dwelling lovingly on this point and that. None of it would ever, perhaps, be carried out literally, yet all of it, surely, was precious, since it showed the freedom he would have given, and the results that, from his standpoint, would have appeared desirable.

It was natural—if only in view of my own preoccupation at the time with the religious ideas of Hinduism—that all these plans should wear a religious colour. They were more conventual than scholastic. The temper of the teaching was more the burden of his thought than the learning to be imparted. Except for a sudden exclamation once, "We must turn out the greatest intellects in India!" I scarcely remember that he ever said anything directly affecting the secular side of the woman's education scheme. He took for granted that anything deserving of

such a name must needs be measured in terms of depth and severity. He was no believer in that false idealism which leads to modification of knowledge or dilution of truth in the name of sex.

How to make the home-background against which the work of education must be carried on, at once thoroughly progressive and thoroughly Hindu, was the problem that engrossed him. There was the task of so translating the formulæ of the old *regime,* moreover, that they might continue to command the reverence of the modernised.

OLD AND NEW

The moral and ethical failures which result from too easy an adoption of foreign ideas, without regard to their effects on social continuity and cohesion, were ever before his eyes. He knew instinctively that the bonds by which the old society had been knit together, must receive a new sanction and a deeper sanctification, in the light of modern learning, or that learning would prove only preliminary to the ruin of India. But he never made the mistake of thinking this reconciliation of old and new an easy matter. How to nationalise the modern and modernise the old, so as to make the two one, was a puzzle that occupied much of his time and thought. He rightly saw that only when it had been pieced together, could national education be in a fair way to begin.

THE FIVE YAJNAS

The way in which the existing obligations of Hindu life might be re-interpreted to include the whole of the modern conception of duty to country and history, suddenly struck him one day, and he exclaimed "How much you might do, with those five *Yajnas!** What great things might be made of them!"

*These are: (1) to the Rishis, by learning; (2) to the Ancestors by family honour (3) to the Gods, by religion (4) to the Animals; and (5) to Mankind.
These five sacrifices are to be performed daily by every Hindu.

The light had broken in a flash, but it did not leave him. He took up the thread of the idea, and went into every detail.

"Out of that old ancestor-*puja*, you might create Hero-worship.

"In the worship of the gods, you must of course use images. But you can change these. Kali need not always be in one position. Encourage your girls to think of new ways of picturing Her. Have a hundred different conceptions of Saraswati. Let them draw and model and paint their own ideas.

"In the chapel, the pitcher on the lowest step of the altar, must be always full of water, and the lights—in great Tamil butter-lamps—must be always burning. If, in addition, the maintenance of perpetual adoration could be organised, nothing could be more in accord with Hindu feeling.

"But the ceremonies employed must themselves be Vedic. There must be a Vedic altar, on which at the hour of worship to light the Vedic fire. And the children must be present to share in the service of oblation. This is a rite which would claim the respect of the whole of India.

"Gather all sorts of animals about you. The cow makes a fine beginning. But you will also have dogs and cats and birds and others. Let the children have a time for going to feed and look after these.

"Then there is the sacrifice of *learning*. That is the most beautiful of all. Do you know that every book is holy, in India? Not the Vedas alone, but the English and Mohammedan also? All are sacred.

"Revive the old arts. Teach your girls fruit-modelling with hardened milk. Give them artistic cooking and sewing. Let them learn painting, photography, the cutting of designs in paper, and gold and silver filigree and embroidery. See that everyone knows something by which she can earn a living, in case of need.

"And never forget Humanity! The idea of a humani-

tarian man-worship exists in nucleus in India, but it has never been sufficiently specialised. Let your women develop it, make poetry, make art, of it. Yes, a daily worship of the feet of beggars, after bathing and before the meal, would be a wonderful practical training of heart and hand together. On some days, again, the worship might be of children, of your own pupils. Or you might borrow babies, and nurse and feed them. What was it that Mataji said to me? 'Swamiji! I have no help. But these blessed ones I worship, and they will take me to salvation!' She feels, you see, that she is serving Uma in the Kumari, and that is a wonderful thought, with which to begin a school."

THE KEY TO IDEALS

But while he was thus prepared to work out the *minutiæ* of the task of connecting old and new, it remained always true that the very presence of the Swami acted in itself as a key to the ideal, putting into direct relation with it every sincere effort that one encountered. It was this that made evident to the crudest eye the true significance of ancient rites. It was this that gave their sudden vividness and value to the fresh applications made spontaneously by modernised Hindus. Thus the reverence of a great Indian man of science for the heroes and martyrs of European science, seemed but the modern form of the ancient salutation of the masters. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake without regard to its concrete application, seemed an inevitable greatness in the race that had dreamt of Jnanam. Serene indifference to fame and wealth proved only that a worker was spiritually the monk, though he might be playing the part of citizen and house-holder.

Of this element in his own life, by which all else that was noble and heroic was made into a recognition, a definite illustration, of an ideal already revealed, the Swami was of course unconscious. Yet this was, as one imagines, the very quintessence of his interpretative power. With regard

to the details of his educational suggestions, their pedagogic soundness had always been startling to me. Nor did I feel that this had been accounted for, even when he told me of a certain period of hardship and struggle, when he had undertaken to translate Herbert Spencer's "Education" into Bengali, and had gone on, becoming interested in the subject, to read all he could find about Pestalozzi also, "though that was not in the bond."

HINDU POTENTIALITY

In fact, so deeply is the Hindu versed in psychological observation, and so perfect an example of the development of faculty has he always before him, in the religious practices of his people, that he enters the field of educational theory with immense advantages. Nor is there any reason why the very centre of scientific thought on the subject should not some day be found with him. Meanwhile, the first step towards so desired a consummation will lie in apprehending the vast possibilities of existing formulæ. Indian educators have to extend and fulfil the vision of Vivekananda. When this is done, when to his reverence and love for the past, we can add his courage and hope for the future, and his allegiance to the sacredness of all knowledge, the time will not be far distant that is to see the Indian woman take her rightful place amongst the womanhood of the world.

XXII

MONASTICISM AND MARRIAGE

To the conscience of the Swami, his monastic vows were incomparably precious. To him personally—as to any sincere monk—marriage, or any step associated with it, would have been the first of crimes. To rise beyond the very memory of its impulse, was his ideal, and to guard himself and his disciples against the remotest danger of it, his passion. The very fact of un-married-ness counted with him as a spiritual asset. It follows from all this, that he was accompanied not only by the constant eagerness for monastic perfection, but also by the equally haunting fear, of loss of integrity. And this fear, however salutary or even necessary to his own fulfilment of the ideal, did undoubtedly, for many years, come between him and the formulation of an ultimate philosophy, on this most important subject.

HONOURABLE WOMEN

It must be understood, however, that his dread was not of woman, but of temptation. As disciples, as co-workers, and even as comrades and playfellows, he was much associated with women, the world over. It happened almost always that he followed the custom of the Indian villages with these friends of his wanderings, and gave them some title of family relationship. In one place he found a group of sisters, elsewhere a mother, a daughter, and so on. Of the nobility of these, and their freedom from false or trivial ideas, he would sometimes boast; for he had in its highest degree that distinction of fine men, to seek for greatness and strength, instead of their opposites, in women. To see girls, as he had seen them in America,

boating, swimming, and playing games, "without once," in his own phrase, "remembering that they were not boys," delighted him. He worshipped that ideal of purity which they thus embodied for him.

In the monastic training he laid constant emphasis on the necessity of being neither man nor woman, because one had risen above both. Anything, even politeness, that emphasised the idea of sex, was horrible to him. The thing that the West calls 'chivalry' appeared to him as an insult to woman. The opinion of some writers that woman's knowledge ought not to be too exact, nor man's to be too sympathetic, would have sounded, in his neighbourhood, like a pitiful meanness. The effort of all alike must be the overcoming of such limitations, imposed on a defiant human spirit by our physical constitution.

WORSHIP OF SARASWATI

The ideal of the life of the student, with its mingling of solitude, austerity, and intense concentration of thought, is known in India as Brahmacharya. "Brahmacharya should be like a burning fire within the veins!" said the Swami. Concentration upon subjects of study, incidental to student-hood, was to him only one form of that negation of personal in impersonal which to his thinking formed so inevitable a part of all great lives, that for its sake he was even tempted to admire Robespierre, in his fanaticism of the Terror. The worship of Saraswati,—by which he meant perfect emotional solitude and self-restraint—he believed with his whole heart to be an essential preparation for any task demanding the highest powers, whether of heart, mind, or body. Such worship had been recognised in India for ages as part of the training of the athlete, and the significance of this fact was that a man must dedicate all the force at his disposal if he were now and again to reach the height of superconscious insight, which appears to others as illumination, inspiration, or transcendent skill.

Such illumination was as necessary to the highest work in art or science, as in religion. No man who was spending himself in other ways selfish or ignoble, could ever have painted a great Madonna, or enunciated the Laws of Gravitation. The civic ideal called as loudly for monastic devotion as the spiritual. The vows of celibacy meant renunciation of the private for the public good. Thus he saw that true manhood could not be, without control of manhood; that the achievement of real greatness, by whatever path, meant always the superiority of the soul to the personal impulse; and finally, that the great monk was also potentially the great worker or great citizen. That he was equally clear as to the converse of this,—as, for instance, that great wifehood or great citizenship can only be, where nunhood or monasticism might have been—I cannot say. I think that perhaps his own life, of monk and guide of monastic aspirants, hid from him this great truth, except in flashes, until the end came, and his summary of conclusions was complete. "It is true," he said once, "that there are women whose very presence makes a man feel driven to God. But there are equally others, who drag him down to hell."

NO PAIN IN LOVE

At his side, it was impossible to think with respect of a love that sought to *use*, to appropriate, to bend to its own pleasure or good, the thing loved. Instead of this, love, to be love at all, must be a welling benediction, a free gift, "without a reason," and careless of return. This was what he meant, by his constant talk of "loving without attachment." Once, indeed, on his return from a journey, he told some of us that he had now realised that the power to attach oneself was quite as important as that of detachment. Each must be instantaneous, complete, wholehearted. And each was only the complement of the other. "Love is always a manifestation of bliss," he said in

England, "the least shadow of pain falling upon it, is always a sign of physicality and selfishness."

EUROPEAN IDEALS

Furthest of all from his admiration were the pulling literature and vitiated art that see human beings primarily as bodies to be possessed, and only in the second place as mind and spirit, eternal in self-mastery and inner freedom. Much, though not all, of our Western idealism, seemed to him to be deeply tainted with this spirit, which he always spoke of as "hiding a corpse beneath flowers."

The ideal of wifehood he thought of, in Eastern fashion, as an unwavering flame of devotion to one alone. Western customs he may have regarded as polyandrous, for I find it difficult otherwise to account for his statement that he had seen women, as great and pure amongst polyandrous peoples, as in the home of his birth. He had travelled in Malabar, but not in Thibet; and in Malabar, as one learns by enquiry, the so-called polyandry is really only matriarchal marriage. The husband visits the wife in her own home, and marriage is not necessarily for life, as in the rest of India; but two men are not received on an equal footing, at the same time. In any case, he had learnt, he said, that "custom was nothing," that use and wont could never altogether thwart or limit human development. He knew that in any country and any race the ideal might shine forth through individuals in all its fulness.

He never attacked a social ideal. He told me, a day or two before I landed in England, on my return there in 1899, that I must take back while in the West, as though I had never dropped them, the social ideals of Europe. To him, in Europe or America, the married woman was not less in honour than the unmarried. Some missionaries on board the ship, during this voyage, were displaying silver wedding-bracelets bought from Tamil women in the stress of famine; and the talk ran on the superstitious dislike of

wives, East and West, to the removal of the wedding-ring from finger or wrist, "You call it a *superstition*?" exclaimed the Swami, in low pained tones of astonishment, "You cannot see the great ideal of chastity, behind?"*

IDEALS OF MARRIAGE

The institution of marriage, however, was always seen by him in its relation to the ideal of spiritual freedom. And freedom, in the Eastern sense, must be understood, not as the right to do, but the right to refrain from doing—that highest inaction which transcends all action. "Against marriage, in order to rise beyond marriage," he admitted one day, in argument, "I have nothing to say." The perfect marriage was, to his thinking, of the type that he had seen in his Master, in his brother Yogananda, and in his disciple Swarupananda. And these were what would in other countries have been regarded as merely nominal. "You see there *is* a difference of outlook on this point!" he said once, discussing the question. "The West regards marriage as consisting in all that lies beyond the legal tie, while in India it is thought of as a bond thrown by society round two people, to unite them together for all eternity. Those two must wed each other, whether they will or not, in life after life. Each acquires half of all the merit of the other. And if one seems in this life to have fallen hopelessly behind, it is for the other only to wait and beat time, till he or she catches up again!"

Sri Ramakrishna, it was said, had always referred to marriage as a special, and to the monastic life as a universal, service. In this he was, one supposes, alluding only to marriages of the very highest type. And this was clearly the determining concept of celibacy or Brahmacharya, in the Swami's own mind. He called souls to take this vow as

*The chastity of the wife, as Hindus think of it, is a word that connotes not only faithfulness to one alone, but also *unwearying* faithfulness. In this ideal, there is no room for the slightest fluctuation of distaste.

if he were calling them to the most honourable of warfare. He regarded a monastic order as "an army" behind a leader, and the teacher whose followers were all citizens and householders, as without an army. There could be no comparison, in his mind, between the strength of a cause that had, and one that had not, this support.

A PATH TO MUKTI

Yet in marriage itself, he was not wholly unable to see a career for the soul. I can never forget his story of an old couple who were separated, after fifty years of companionship, at the doors of the work-house. "What!" exclaimed the old man, at the close of the first day, "Can't I see Mary and kiss her before she goes to sleep? Why, I haven't missed doing that at night, for fifty years!" "Think of it!" said the Swami, glowing with the thought of an achievement so high, "Think of it! Such self-control and steadiness as that, ARE Mukti! Marriage itself had been the path for those two souls!"

He held with unfaltering strength, that the freedom to refrain from marriage, if she wished, ought to be considered as a natural right of woman. A child, whose exclusive leaning to the devotional life was already strongly marked before she was twelve, had once appealed to him for protection against proposals of alliance that were being made by her family. And he, by using his influence with her father, and suggesting increased dowers for the younger daughters, had been successful in aiding her. Years had gone by, but she was still faithful to the life she had adopted, with its long hours of silence and retirement; and all her younger sisters were now wedded. To force such a spirit into marriage would in his eyes have been a desecration. He was proud, too, to count up the various classes,—of child-widows, wives of Kulin Brahmins, rare cases of the undowered and so on—who represent the unmarried woman in Hindu society.

He held that the faithfulness of widows was the very pillar on which social institutions rested. Only he would have liked to declare as high an idea for men as for women in this respect. The old Aryan conception of marriage, symbolised in the fire lighted at marriage, and worshipped morning and evening by husband and wife together, pointed to no inequality of standards or responsibilities as between the two. Rama, in the epic of Valmiki, had been as true to Sita, as Sita to him.

PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE

The Swami was not unaware of the existence of social problems, in connection with marriage, in all parts of the world. "These unruly women," he exclaims, in the course of a lecture in the West, "from whose minds the words 'bear and forbear' are gone for ever!" He could admit, also, when continuance in a marriage would involve treachery to the future of humanity, that separation was the highest and bravest course for husband or wife to take. In India he would constantly point out that Oriental and Occidental ideals needed to be refreshed by one another. He never attacked social institutions as such, holding always that they had grown up out of a desire to avoid some evil which their critic was possibly too headstrong to perceive. But he was not blind to the over-swing of the pendulum, in one direction or the other.

"There is such pain in this country!" he said one day in India, speaking of marriage by arrangement instead of by choice. "Such pain! Some, of course there must always have been. But now the sight of Europeans, with their different customs, has increased it. Society knows that there is another way!"

"We have exalted motherhood, and you wifehood," he said again, to a European, "and I think both might gain by some interchange."

Again, there was the dream that he recounted on

board ship, "in which I heard two voices discussing the marriage-ideals of the East and the West, and the conclusion of the whole was, that there was something in each with which as yet, the world could ill afford to part." It was this conviction that led him to spend so much time examining into differences of social ideals, as between East and West.

"In India," he said, "the wife must not dream of loving even a son as she loves her husband. She must be Sati. But the husband ought not to love his wife as he does his mother. Hence a reciprocated affection is not thought so high as one unreturned. It is 'shopkeeping.' The joy of the contact of husband and wife is not admitted in India. This we have to borrow from the West. Our ideal needs to be refreshed by yours. And you, in turn, need something of our devotion to motherhood."

THE MONK ALONE FREE

But the overwhelming thought that his very presence carried home to the mind was of the infinite superiority of that life which seeks only the freedom of the soul and the service of all, to that which looks for comfort and the sweetness of home. He knew well enough the need that great workers may feel of being encircled by subordinated human lives. "You need not mind," he said once, turning to a disciple with great tenderness and compassion, "You need not mind, if these shadows of home and marriage cross your mind sometimes. Even to me, they come now and again!" And again, hearing of an expression of intense loneliness on the part of a friend, he exclaimed. "Every worker feels like that at times!"

But infinite danger lay, to his thinking, in a false exaltation of any social ideal at the risk of jeopardising the eternal supremacy of the super-social. "Never forget to say to all whom you teach," he charged one of his disciples solemnly, "that like a little fire-fly beside the brightness of

the sun, like a grain of sand beside the vastness of Mount Meru, SO is the life of the citizen compared with that of the Sannyasin!"

He knew the danger that lay here, of spiritual pride, and his own means of overcoming this lay in bowing himself down to anyone, whether monk or householder, who was disciple and devotee of his own Master, Sri Ramakrishna. But to abate the *dictum* itself, would have been, in his eyes, to have minimised the ideal, and this he could not do. Instead, he felt that one of the most important responsibilities lying, in the present age, upon the religious orders, was the preaching of monastic ideals even in marriage, in order that the more difficult might always exercise its compelling and restraining force upon the easier path; and that the false glamour of romance,—obscuring the solitary grandeur and freedom of the soul, as the ultimate aim, in the name of an interesting and absorbing companionship,—might be utterly destroyed.

IDEAL MARRIAGE

All the disciples of Ramakrishna believe that marriage is finally perfected by the man's acceptance of his wife as the mother; and this means, by their mutual adoption of the monastic life. It is a moment of the mergence of the human in the divine, by which all life stands thenceforward changed. The psychological justification of this ideal is said to be the fact that, up to this critical point, the relation of marriage consists in a constant succession of a two-fold impulse, the waxing followed by the waning, of affection. With the abandonment of the external, however, impulse is transcended, and there is no fluctuation. Henceforth the beloved is worshipped in perfect steadfastness of mind.

Yet in dealing with his views on this question, one cannot but remember his utterance on the contrast between Hinduism and Buddhism, that Sunday morning in Kashmir.

when we walked under the avenue of poplars, and listened to him as he talked of Woman and of Caste. "The glory of Hinduism," he said that day, "lies in the fact that while it has defined ideals, it has never dared to say that any one of these alone was the one true way. In this it differs from Buddhism, which exalts monasticism above all others, as the path that must be taken by all souls to reach perfection. The story given in the Mahabharata of the young saint who was made to seek enlightenment, first from a maried woman, and then from a butcher, is sufficient to show this. 'By doing my duty' said each one of these when asked, 'by doing my duty in my own station, have I attained this knowledge.' There is no career then," he ended, "which might not be the path to God. The question of attainment depends only, in the last resort, on the thirst of the soul."

IDEALISING SELF

Thus the fact that all life is great, only in proportion to its expression of ideal purity, was not, in theory, outside the Swami's acceptance, however much, as a monk, he shrank from interpretations which might lead to the false claim that marriage was chosen as a means to spirituality. That self-love constantly leads us to such subtle exaltation of our own acts and motives, he was well aware. He had constantly, he told us, met with persons, in Western countries, who urged that their own lives, though indolently passed in the midst of luxury, were without selfishness; that only the claims of duty kept them in the world: that in their affections, they were able to realise renunciation without a struggle. On all such illusions, he poured out his scorn. "My only answer was," he said, "that such great men are not born in India! The model in this kind was the great king Janaka, and in the whole of history he occurs but once!" In connection with this particular form of error, he would point out that there are two forms

of idealism ; one is the worship and exaltation of the ideal itself, the other is the glorification of that which we have already attained. In this second case, the ideal is really subordinated to self.

In this severity, however, there was no cynicism. Those who have read our Master's work on Devotion or Bhakti Yoga, will remember there the express statement that the lover always sees the ideal in the beloved. "Cling to this vision!" I have heard of his saying—to a girl whose love for another stood newly-confessed—"As long as you can both see the ideal in one another, your worship and happiness will grow more instead of less."

HIS FINAL UTTERANCE

Amongst the friends of our Master there was, however, one middle-aged woman who was never satisfied that, in his intensity of monasticism, he was able to do full justice to the sacredness and helpfulness of marriage. She had herself been long a widow, after an unusually blessed experience of married life. Very naturally, therefore, it was to this friend that he turned, when, a few weeks before the end, he arrived at what he knew to be his crowning conviction on this whole subject ; and his letter was brought to her in her distant home by the same hand that was carrying also the telegraphic announcement of his death. In this letter, so solemnly destined, he says:—"In my opinion, a race must first cultivate a great respect for motherhood, through the sanctification and inviolability of marriage, before it can attain to the ideal of perfect chastity. The Roman Catholics and the Hindus, holding marriage sacred and inviolate, have produced great chaste men and women of immense power. To the Arab, marriage is a contract, or a forceful possession, to be dissolved at will, and we do not find there the development of the ideal of the virgin, or the Brahmacharin. Modern Buddhism,—having fallen among races who have not even yet come

up to the evolution of marriage—has made a travesty of monasticism. So, until there is developed in Japan a great and sacred ideal about marriage (apart from mutual attraction and love), I do not see how there can be great monks and nuns. As you have come to see that the glory of life is chastity, so my eyes also have been opened to the necessity of this great sanctification for the vast majority, in order that a few life-long chaste powers may be produced."

FIDELITY ESSENTIAL

There are some of us who feel that this letter has an even wider-reaching significance than he himself would have thought of ascribing to it. It was the last sentence in the great philosophy which saw "in the Many and the One the same Reality." If the inviolability of marriage be indeed the school in which a society is made ready for the highest possibilities of the life of solitude and self-control, then the honourable fulfilment of the world's work is as sacred a means to supreme self-realisation, as worship and prayer. We have here, then, a law which enables us to understand the discouragement of religious ecstasy, by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and his great preference for character, in his disciples. We understand, too, the inner meaning of Vivekananda's own constant preaching of strength. The reason is very simple. If "the Many and the One be the same Reality, seen by the same mind at different times, and in different attitudes," then, in three words, Character is Spirituality. "Greatness" really is, as a deep thinker has affirmed, "to take the common things of life, and walk truly amongst them ; and holiness a great love and much serving." These simple truths may prove after all, to be the very core of the new gospel. And in endorsement of this possibility, we have the Master's own words "The highest truth is always the simplest."

XXIII

OUR MASTER'S RELATION TO PSYCHIC PHENOMENA SO-CALLED

INDIA is undoubtedly the land of the understanding of psychology. To Hindus, more than to any other race, it may be said that men appear as minds. Concentration of mind is to them the ideal of life. Such differences as between talent and genius, between ordinary goodness and the highest sainthood, between moral weakness and power, are by them understood as simple differences in degree of concentration. This pre-occupation of the race is partly cause, and partly effect, doubtless, of the fact that the study of psychology has been organised in India as a science, from the earliest times. Long before the value of writing, for the notation of knowledge, was even suspected, the quiet registration of phenomena in the communal consciousness, had begun, by the interchange of ideas and observations. Millenniums before instruments and laboratories could be thought of, as having any bearing on scientific enquiry in general, the age of experiment was fully developed amongst the Indian people, with regard to this most characteristic of their sciences.

NO SUPERNATURAL

It is not surprising that in the singularly wide range of knowledge thus accumulated in India, many phenomena of the mind, which appear to the less informed West as abnormal or miraculous, should be duly noted and classified. Thus hypnotism, and many obscure forms of *hyperœsthesis* and *hyperkinesis*,—the most familiar of these being healing, thought-reading, clairvoyance, and clairaudience—offer no

overwhelming difficulty to the student of the ancient Indian psychology, or Raja Yoga as it is called.

We all know that the great value of scientific thought lies in enabling us to recognise and record phenomena. It matters little that a disease is rare, if only it be once noted as within the field of medical practice. It has a place thenceforth, in the human mind. It is no miracle, only because, sooner or later, it will be classified. It has a name. The conjunction of diagnosis and treatment is now a question of time only.

Something of the same sort applies to the trustworthy fraction of what are commonly referred to as "psychic phenomena." Occurrences falling under this head, when authentic, are obviously no more supernatural than the liquefaction of air, or the extraction of radium. Indeed the propriety of the word 'supernatural' is always open to dispute, inasmuch as if once a thing can be proved to occur, it is clearly within nature, and to call it supernatural becomes by that very fact, absurd. In India the phenomena in question are regarded as cases of extension of faculty, and their explanation is sought, not in event, but in the state of the mind witnessing it, since it is to be supposed that this will always, under given conditions, register a perception different from the accustomed.

STRANGE FACTS

In Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, living in the garden of Dakshineshwar, his disciples had been familiar, for years, with many of those mental characteristics which are noted in the books as distinctive of the highest degree of concentration. He was so responsive that he would meet them at the door on their arrival, and begin at once to answer, without being told of them, the questions that the boys carried written in their pockets. His perceptions were so fine that he could tell by touch the character of anyone who might already have come in contact with his food, his clothes, or his mat. It "burnt" him, he said, of an

impress from which he shrank; or, on another occasion, "Look! I can eat this. The sender must have been some good soul!" His nervous system, again, had been so charged with certain ideas that even in sleep he shrank from the touch of metal, and his hand would, apparently of its own accord, restore a book or a fruit, whose return to its owner the conscious mind had failed to prompt.

No Indian psychologist would say of one of the world-seers that he had talked with angels, but only that he had known how to reach a mood in which he believed himself to talk with angels. Of this condition, the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna saw plentiful examples. Stories are still current amongst them, regarding the strangeness of the sensations with which they would listen to one side of a dialogue, or one part in a conversation, which might seem to be carried on for hours at a time; while their Master, resting quietly, evidently believed himself to be holding communion with beings invisible to them.

SAMADHI NOT CATALEPSY

Behind all these manifold experiences of Ramakrishna, binding them into one great life, was always the determination to serve mankind. Vivekananda spoke of him in after-years as 'writhing on the ground' during the hours of darkness, in the agony of his prayer that he might return to earth again, even as a dog, if only he might aid a single soul. In moments less intimate and hidden than these, he would speak of the temptation of the higher realisations, to draw the soul away from conditions of service. And his disciples connected with this such odd utterances as they would sometimes hear, at the end of a deep entrancement, when their Master seemed to be like a child coaxing his Mother to let him run away from Her to play. 'Just one more' act of service, or 'one more' little enjoyment would be urged, on such an occasion, as a motive for returning to common consciousness. That return, however, always brought with it the infinite love and insight of one

who had been lost in God. When the Swami Vivekananda, on the occasion of his Harvard Address, defines this as the *differentia* between the unconsciousness of Samadhi, and the unconsciousness of catalepsy, we may take it that the assurance which breathes in every syllable, arose from his having constantly witnessed the transition, in his Master.

There were still other remarkable traits in Sri Ramakrishna. He had his own nervous force so entirely under control that he could remove all consciousness from his throat, for instance, during his last illness, and allow it to be operated on, as if under a local anaesthetic. His faculties of observation, again, were quite unique. The smallest detail of the physical constitution had a meaning for him, as casting light on the personality within. He would throw the disciple who had just come to him into an hypnotic sleep, and learn from his subconscious mind, in a few minutes, all that was lodged there, concerning the far past. Each little act and word, insignificant to others, was to him like a straw, borne on the great current of character, and showing the direction of its flow. There were times, he said, when men and women seemed to him like glass, and he could look them through and through.

THE MASTER'S TOUCH

Above all, he could by his touch give flashes of supreme insight, which exercised a formative and compelling power over whole lives. In the matter of Samadhi this is well-known, especially in reference to women-visitors at Dakshineshwar. But beyond this, a story was told me by a simple soul, of a certain day during the last few weeks of Sri Ramakrishna's life, when he came out into the garden at Cossipore, and placed his hand on the heads of a row of persons, one after another, saying in one case, *"Aj thak!"* "Today let be!" in another, *"chaitanya houk!"* "Be awakened!" and so on. And after this, a different gift came to each one thus blessed. In one there awoke an infinite sorrow. To another, everything about him became

symbolic, and suggested ideas. With a third, the benediction was realised as over-welling bliss. And one saw a great light, which never thereafter left him, but accompanied him always everywhere, so that never could he pass a temple, or a wayside shrine, without seeming to see there, seated in the midst of this effulgence,—smiling or sorrowful as he at the moment might deserve—a Form that he knew and talked of as "the Spirit that dwells in the images."

By such stimulating of each man to his own highest and best, or by such communication of experience as one and another could bear at the time, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa built up the rigorous integrity and strong discrimination that one sees in all who were made by his hand. "We believe nothing without testing it," says one—Ramakrishnananda by name—"we have been trained to this." And when I enquired from another of the disciples what particular form this training took, he answered, after deep thought, that it lay in some experience given of the Reality, from which each gained a knowledge that could never be deceived. "By our own effort," says Vivekananda, in one of his earlier lectures, "*or by the mercy of some great perfected soul,* we reach the highest."

LIMITS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Now the life of the guru is the disciple's treasure in hand ; and it was undoubtedly by an instantaneous analysis of all that he had seen and shared, of the extensions possible to human faculty, that the Swami was able, on his arrival in the Western sphere of psychical enquiry, to classify all knowledge as sub-conscious, conscious, and super-conscious. The two first terms were in common enough use, in Europe and America. The third, he himself added to the psychological vocabulary, by a masterly stroke of insight, authenticated by his own personal knowledge. "Consciousness," he said on one occasion, "is a mere film between two oceans, the sub-conscious and the super-conscious." Again he exclaimed "I could not believe

my own ears, when I heard Western people talking so much of *consciousness*! Consciousness? What does consciousness matter! Why, it is NOTHING, as compared with the unfathomable depths of the sub-conscious, and the heights of the super-conscious! In this I could never be misled, for had I not seen Ramakrishna Paramahamsa gather in ten minutes, from a man's sub-conscious mind, the whole of his past, and determine from that his future and his powers?"

The certainty of the *dictum* laid down in Raja Yoga that intuition, when genuine, can never contradict reason, is also indisputably due to the same comprehensive range of experience. The ascetic of Dakshineshwar might be capable of unusual modes of insight, but he was no victim of the vanity born thereof, to be seeking for uncommon ways of arriving at facts that were accessible enough by ordinary methods. When a strange religious came to visit the garden, professing to be able to live without food, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa attempted no clairvoyant mode of testing him, but simply set shrewd observers to watch and bring him word as to what and where he was in the habit of eating.

Nothing was to be accepted, unproven, and the Swami Vivekananda, to his dying day, had a horror of those dreams, previsions, and prophecies by which ordinary folk are so apt to try to dominate one another. These things, as was inevitable, were offered to him in abundance, but he invariably met them with defiance, leaving them to work themselves out, if they were true, in spite of him. Whether a given foretelling would eventually be verified or not, it was impossible for him, he said, to know: the one thing of which he was sure was, that if he once obeyed it, he would never again be allowed to go free.

VALUE OF THE PSYCHIC

In the case of Sri Ramakrishna, it invariably happened that visions and intuitions were directed to things of the

spirit; gipsy-like prognostications were far from him and in the opinion of his disciples, such prognostications are always indicative of a greater or less misusing of energy. "All these are side-issues," said the Swami, "they are not true Yoga. They may have a certain usefulness, in establishing indirectly the truth of our statements. Even a little glimpse gives faith that there is something behind gross matter. Yet those who spend time on such things run into grave dangers." "These are *frontier questions*!" he exclaimed impatiently, on another occasion, "there can never be any certainty or stability of knowledge, reached by their means. Did I not say they were 'frontier questions'? The boundary-line is always shifting!"

FRAUDULENT METHODS

In all that might come before us, the attempt at discrimination was to be maintained. "I shall accept it when I have experienced it," was to be the reply to statements of the extraordinary. But our own experience was to be shifted thoroughly. We were not to run away with the first explanation of a phenomenon that might occur to us. In spite of his reluctance to accept easy conclusions, however, the Swami became convinced, in the course of years, of the occasional return of persons from the dead. "I have several times in my life seen ghosts," he said once, with great deliberateness, "and once, in the week after the death of Sri Ramakrishna, I saw a luminous ghost." But this did not imply the smallest respect on his part, for the bulk of the experiments known as spiritualistic *seances*. Of a famous convert whom he met on one such occasion, he said that it was sad to find a man of extraordinary intelligence in matters of the world, leaving all his intelligence behind him at the doors of a so-called medium. In America he had been present at a number of *seances* as a witness, and he regarded the great majority of the phenomena displayed as grossly fraudulent. "Always the greatest fraud by the simplest means," he said, summing

up his observations. Another large fraction of the total he thought, were better explained by subjective methods,* than as objectively true. If, after all these deductions had been made, any residuum remained, it was possible that this might be genuinely what it professed.

THE GOAL OF ALL

But even if so, knowledge of the phenomenal could never be the goal of effort. The return of wandering wills from one plane of physical tension to another could throw but little light on any true concept of immortality. Only by renunciation could this be reached. Any dwelling upon the occult led inevitably, in the Swami's opinion, to increase of desire, to increase of egotism, and to the fall into untruth. If the ordinary good of life was to be given up, for the sake of the soul, how much more assuredly so, these vanities of supernatural power! Even Christianity would have seemed to him a higher creed, if it had had no miracles. Buddha's abhorrence of wonders was the eternal glory of Buddhism. At best their value could only be to give a little confidence, and that only for the first steps. "If there be powers, they shall vanish away; charity alone remaineth." Only to the soul that is strong enough to avoid these temptations does the door stand open. In the words of Patanjali, "To him who is able to reject all the powers, comes the cloud of virtue." He alone attains the very highest.

* Thus a well-known thought-reader in Southern India claimed that an invisible female figure stood beside him, and told him what to say. "I did not like this explanation," said the Swami, "and sat myself to find another." He came to the conclusion that the source of information was subjective.

XXIV

THE SWAMI'S TEACHING ABOUT DEATH

TEACHING BY SILENCE

One of the most impressive forms of teaching practised by our Master was a certain silent change wrought in the disciple unawares, by his presence. One's whole attitude to things was reversed; one took fire, as it were, with a given idea; or one suddenly found that a whole habit of thought had left one, and a new opinion grown up in its place, without the interchange of a single word on the subject. It seemed as if a thing had passed beyond the realm of discussion, and knowledge had grown, by the mere fact of nearness to him. It was in this way that questions of taste and value became indifferent. It was in this way that the longing for renunciation was lighted, like a devouring flame, in the hearts of those about him. And to nothing could this statement be more applicable, than to the idea of death that one seemed to imbibe from him.

In his own life-time, he became more and more averse to any definite laying-down of the law, on this subject. "I suppose so, I do not know," would be his answer, to one who was striving to piece out the eternal puzzle. He probably felt that one of the subtlest forms of self-interest lay in delightful dreams of a future happiness, and he dreaded adding to the ignorance of desire, by any emphasis laid on the conditions of life outside the body. In death, as in life, for himself, God was the only means, and Nirvana was the goal. "The highest Samadhi was all that counted: all the rest was wild oats." Yet this very fact sheds all the brighter light on the way in which one's thought of death changed under him; and makes the more precious,

those two or three letters, in which personal experience and sympathy strike from him a definite expression of opinion.

For my own part, when I first met the Swami, I had felt driven, for many years past, to hold that whatever our wishes might be, we had no actual reason to imagine any survival of personality, beyond the death of the body. Such a thing was either impossible or unthinkable. If we had no personal experience of body without mind,—the experiencing medium,—it was equally true that we knew nothing whatever of mind without body. Hence, if mind were not actually the result of body—"a note struck upon the harp-strings"—we must suppose it, at best, to be only the opposite pole of a single substance. The two—body and mind, not matter and mind—were one, and the idea of the persistence of personality was a mere shadow, born of animal instinct. Ethical conduct, rising even to supreme self-sacrifice, was determined at bottom, by our personal preference for gratifications that were socially beneficent.*

EUROPEAN THOUGHT

These positions were undermined, in my own case, by the weight and emphasis which the Indian thinker habitually threw on mind, as the pivot of life. What the modern really believes is that *man is a body*. Here the

* Something like this may be taken as the characteristic thought of Europe about death, during the second half of the nineteenth century. "Is the soul," said one thinker, "a note struck upon the harp-strings, or the rower seated in a boat?" Recent talk of the disintegration of matter, has now made it easy, even for scientific workers, "to conceive of a cycle—call it mind—in which matter practically is not." But even so, there remains yet to be worked out, as far as the West is concerned, the transition, from the individual mind and body to this sum of mind and matter into which both may be resumed. It is not intended, here, to imply that ethical conduct ultimately rests, in any creed, on a belief in the immortality of the soul; but only to contrast the agnostic view of a spiritual life built up from below, and the Hindu idea of a physical consciousness, which is after all, merely an expression and mask of the spiritual life, with its insatiable thirst, not for self-preservation, but for self-immolation. The modern reasons from seen to unseen; from detail to general; the Hindu reasons from universal to particular, and maintains that in this specific case that is the true method of reasoning, the life of the soul being, in fact, the only known.

Oriental stands in sharp and instinctive contrast to him. As the Swami pointed out, "Western languages declare that man is a body, and has a soul: Eastern languages declare that he is a soul, and has a body."

As a result of the new hypothesis, I began to speak to people, first postulating to myself experimentally, that I was addressing the mind within, not the ear without. The immense increase of response that this evoked, led me from step to step till twelve months later, I suddenly found that I had fallen into the habit of thinking of mind as dominant, and could no longer imagine its being extinguished by the death of the body! Every new practice deepened this conviction, and I became gradually possessed of a conception of the world about us as mind-born, while the occurrence of any great and sudden change in our thought-world, at a definite physical moment, began to seem absurd.

MAN NOT BODY

The Swami's thought on the question went, however, much deeper than this. His was the perpetual effort to avoid slipping into any identification of himself with the body. He would never even use the word "I" in any sense that might be so construed, preferring, rather quaintly to an English ear, to give a slight gesture, with the words "all this." But he also fought shy of the danger of admitting that the life of the senses, limited as this is by the alternating opposites, was *'life'* at all. Victory or defeat, love or hate, efficiency or ineffectiveness, being each only a partial apprehension, could never, amongst them, make up absolute existence. Hundreds of lives like the present, each bound, in its own time, to have an end, could never, as he expressed it, satisfy our hunger for immortality. For that, nothing would do but the attainment of *deathlessness*, and this could never be interpreted as in any sense the multiplication or exaltation of life within the senses. To be of any security, it must be possible to realise such deathlessness during this present life, for how else could the

transcendence of bodily experience be assured? Western people were in the habit of saying that 'the soul comes and goes,' thus betraying their own tendency to identify themselves with the body, watching the entrance and exit of a higher entity. The speech of the Kentish Druid who welcomed Augustine was typical of all who held this world to be the warm and lighted hall, and the soul a sparrow, taking brief refuge there, from the wintry storms without. Yet in this concept, there were to the full as many assumptions, as in its opposite. To one who was impelled irresistibly upon the hypothesis that we are not an aggregate of physical units at all, but a hyper-physical unity, holding these in suspension, to such a one it was equally clear that we really know only that *"the body comes and goes."*

THE PRISONING BODY

By this constant insistence on man as mind, not body, those with whom the Swami was associated were brought to see death as no terminal fatality, but only a link from the midst of a chain, in the experience of the soul. Our whole centre of vision was thus shifted. Instead of the lighted hall, this life became for us the prison of hypnotic trance, a broken somnambulistic dream. What! was utterance to be for ever limited and conditioned by human language? Were there not flashes, even as it was, of something that transcended this, something that compelled without words; that illuminated without teaching; communion direct, profound? Must knowledge remain for ever relative, for ever based on the dim and commonplace perceptions of the senses, for ever finding expression, in the hard and narrow issues of conduct? Well might the Swami exclaim, as he did in the course of a New York lecture, almost with a groan, "Man, the infinite dreamer, dreaming finite dreams!"

By his scorn of such, by his own passionate longing to wander off, silent and nude, along the banks of the Ganges, by his constant turning to the super-conscious as

the only content of consciousness to be desired, by his personal attitude to the relationships of life as so many fetters and impedimenta to the freedom of the soul, Vivekananda built up in those about him some sort of measure of Real Existence, and the idea that the mere fall of the body could seriously interrupt this, became impossible. We were saturated with the thought that the accessories of life were but so many externals of a passing dream, and it seemed obvious that we should go onwards, after death, much as we were doing before it, with only such added intensity and speed as might be due to the subtler medium in which we should find ourselves. It seemed obvious too, that, as he declared, an eternal heaven or hell, based on the deeds of this present life, was an absurdity, since a finite cause could not, by any means, have an infinite effect.

NO DOGMA

Yet the Swami laid down no hard and fast conclusions on these subjects, for others to accept. He carried those about him at any given time, as far as they could go, by the force of his own vision, by the energy of his effort to express in words the things he himself saw. But he would have nothing to do with dogma, and he was exceedingly averse to making promises about the future. As already said, "I do not know" became more and more his answer, as years went on to questions about the fate of the soul in death. Each one, to his thinking, must work out his own belief, basing it on the data of his own experience. Nothing that he should say must ever interfere with the free growth of personal conviction.

Some things, however, were noticeable. He appeared to share the common assumption that after death we meet again and 'talk things out,' so to speak, with those who have preceded us. "When I stand before the old man," he would say with a smile of whimsical tenderness, "I must not have to tell him so and so!" Nor did I ever see in

him any struggle against this assumption. He appeared to take it simply, as one of the facts of life.

A REQUIEM

A man who has once reached the Nirvikalpa Samadhi must have passed through many psychological conditions on the way, correspondent to disembodiment. He must be accessible, during such phases, to experiences from which we are ordinarily debarred. Now and again, as the Swami believed, he had met and held converse with the spirits of the dead. To some one who spoke of the terror of the supernatural, he said "This is always a sign of imagination. On that day when you really meet what we call a ghost, you will know no fear!" There is a story told, amongst his brethren, of certain suicides who came to him at Madras, urging him to join them, and disturbing him greatly by the statement that his mother was dead. Having ascertained by enquiry that his mother was well, he remonstrated with these souls for their untruthfulness, but was answered that they were now in such unrest and distress that the telling of truth or falsehood was indifferent to them. They begged him to set them at peace, and he went out to the seashore at night, to perform a Shraddha for them. But when he came to that place, in the service, where offerings should be made, he had nothing to offer, and knew not what to do. Then he remembered an old book that said, in the absence of all other means of sacrifice, sand might be used, and taking up great handfuls of sand, he stood there on the shore casting it into the sea, and with his whole mind sending benediction to the dead. And those souls had rest. They troubled him no more.

Another experience that he could never forget, was his glimpse of Sri Ramakrishna, in the week succeeding his death. It was night. He, and one other were sitting outside the house at Cossipore, talking, no doubt, of that loss of which their hearts at the moment were so full. Their Master had left them, only some few days before.

Suddenly, the Swami saw a shining form enter the garden, and draw near to them. "What was that? What was that?" said his friend, in a hoarse whisper, a few minutes later. It has been one of those rare cases in which an apparition is seen by two persons at once.

MAN THE HIGHEST BEING

Experiences like these could not fail to create a body of belief in the mind that went through them, and in a letter written from Thousand Island Park, dated August 1895, the Swami gives expression to this conviction. He says: "The older I grow, the deeper I see into the idea of the Hindus that *man* is the greatest of all beings. The only so-called higher beings are the departed, and these are nothing but men who have taken another body. This is finer, it is true, but still a *man-body,* with hands and feet and so on. And they live on this earth, in another Akasha,* without being absolutely invisible. They also think, and have consciousness, and everything else, like us. So they also are men. So are the Devas, the angels. But man alone becomes God, and they have all to become men again, in order to become God."

To those who believe in our Master as a "competent witness," all this will have its own value. They will feel, even where he expresses what is only an inference, only an opinion, that it is yet an opinion based upon unique opportunity of experience.

NEED OF RITUAL

By the time his first period of work in America was finished, on the eve of coming to England in 1896, he seems to have felt the necessity of systematising his religious teaching. Having at first given forth his wealth of know-

* May be translated *sky, space,* or (in the present case) *plane* or *dimension.*

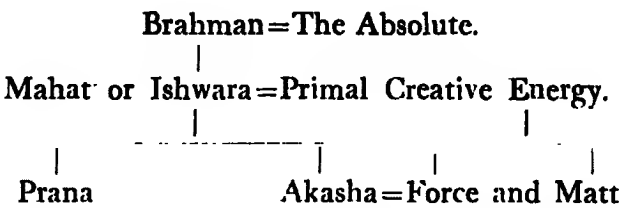
ledge and thought without stint, we may suppose that he had now become aware of the vastness of his output, that he saw its distinctive features clearly and that he felt the possibility of unifying and condensing it, round a few leading ideas. Once started on this attempt, he would realise, in all probability, that some statement regarding the fate of the soul was essential to a universal acceptance of the Vedanta. A letter written to an English friend, during his first visit to England, in October 1895, showed plainly enough that he was awake to the question of the definite area to be covered by a religious system. On this particular occasion, a visit from a couple of youngmen who belonged to a "class philosophically religious, without the least mystery-mongering," had called his attention to the need of ritual. "This," he wrote, "has opened my eyes. The world in general must have some form. In fact religion itself, in the ordinary sense, is simply philosophy concreted, by means of symbols and ritual. A mere loose system of philosophy takes no hold on mankind."

VEDANTA AND SCIENCE

The constructive imagination thus roused was seen in two or three subsequent letters to the same friend; and in one of these, while still under the mental stimulus of conversation with a distinguishd electrician, he attacks the whole problem of the relation between force and matter, making at the same time a brief but pregnant epitome of what he regards as significant, in Hindu lore about death. It is easy, as one reads this letter, to see how he has been thrilled by the congruity of ancient Indian thought with modern science. "Our friend," he writes, "was charmed to hear about the Vedantic Prana and Akasha and the Kalpas, which, according to him, are the only theories modern science can entertain. Now both Akasha and Prana again, are produced from the cosmic Mahat, the universal mind, the Brahma, or Ishwara. He thinks he can demonstrate mathematically that force and matter are reducible to

potential energy. I am to go and see him next week, to get this new mathematical demonstration.

"In that case, the Vedantic cosmology will be placed on the surest of foundations. I am working a good deal now, upon the cosmology and eschatology* of the Vedanta. I clearly see their perfect unison with modern science, and the elucidation of the one will be followed by that of the other. I intend to write a work later on, in the form of questions and answers. The first chapter will be on cosmology, showing the harmony between Vedantic theories and modern science.



The eschatology will be explained from the Adwaitic standpoint only. That is to say, the dualist claims that the soul after death passes on to the Solar Sphere, thence to the Lunar Sphere, thence to the Electric Sphere. Thence he is accompanied by a Purusha to Brahmaloka. (Thence, says the Adwaitist, he goes to Nirvana).

"Now on the Adwaitic side it is held that the Soul neither comes nor goes, and that all these spheres or layers of the universe are only so many varying products of Akasha and Prana. That is to say, the lowest or most condensed is the *Solar Sphere,* consisting of the visible universe, in which Prana appears as physical force, and Akasha as sensible matter. The next is called the *Lunar Sphere,* which surrounds the Solar Sphere. This is not the moon at all, but the habitation of the gods, that is to say, Prana appears in it as psychic forces, and Akasha as Tanmatras, or fine particles. Beyond this is the *Electric Sphere,* that

* *Eschatology* means doctrine of the last things; according to Christianity, Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell. In other words, the fate of the soul.

is to say, a condition in which the Prana is almost inseparable from Akasha, and you can hardly tell whether Electricity is force or matter. Next is the Brahmaloka, where there is neither Prana nor Akasha, but both are merged into the *Mind-stuff,* the primal energy. And here—there being neither Prana nor Akasha—the Jiva contemplates the whole universe as Samashti, or the sumtotal of Mahat, or mind. This appears as a Purusha, an abstract universal *Soul,* yet not the Absolute, for still there is multiplicity. From this, the Jiva finds at last that Unity which is the end. Adwaitism says that these are the visions which arise in succession before the Jiva, who, himself, neither goes nor comes, and that in the same way this present vision has been projected. The projection (Srishti) and dissolution must take place in the same order, only one means goes backward and the other coming out.

THE THEORY OF DUALISM

"Now, as each individual can only see *his own* universe, that universe is created with his bondage, and goes away with his liberation, although it remains for others who are in bondage. Now name and form constitute the universe. A wave in the ocean is a wave, only in so far as it is bound by name and form. If the wave subsides, it is the ocean, but that name-and-form has immediately vanished forever. So that the name and form of a wave could never be, without the *water* that was fashioned into the wave by them, yet the name and form themselves were not the wave. They die as soon as ever it returns to water. But other names and forms live on, in relation to other waves. This name-and-form is called Maya, and the water is Brahman. The wave was nothing but water all the time, yet as a *wave* it had the name and form. Again this name-and-form cannot remain for one moment separated from the wave, although the wave, as water, can remain eternally separate from name and form. But because the name and

form can never be *separated,* they can never be said to *exist.* Yet they are not *zero.* This is called Maya.

"I want to work all this out carefully, but you will see at a glance that I am on the right track. It will take more study in physiology, on the relations between the higher and lower centres, to fill out the psychology of mind, Chitta and Buddhi, and so on. But I have clear light now, free from all hocus-pocus."

SYNTHESIS OF BELIEFS

Once more in this letter, and so often elsewhere, we see the reconciling and organising force of the Swami's genius. The standard of Shankaracharya shall not be moved. That "the soul neither comes nor goes" remains to all time the dominant truth. But the labours of those who began their work at the opposite end shall not be wasted either. The Adwaitin, with his philosophic insight, and the Dualist, with his scientific observation of successive phases of consciousness,—both are necessary, to each other and to the new formulation.*

Death, however, is pre-eminently a matter which is best envisaged from without. Not even under personal bereavement can we see so clearly into the great truths of eternal destiny, as when depth of friendship and affection leads us to dramatise our sympathy for the sorrow of another. The comfort that we dared not lean on for ourselves becomes conviction clear as the noonday sun, when we seek it for others. To this rule, the Swami was no exception, and many of us, it may be, will think the greatest of all his utterances on this subject, a certain letter which he wrote to that American woman whom he called "Dhira Mata, the Steady Mother," on the occasion of the loss of

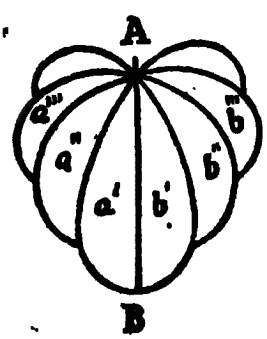
* The Swami's plan, of writing a book in the form of questions and answers, was never carried out. But in studying the lectures he delivered in London in the year 1896, it is easy to see that his mind was still working on the ideas here announced. See especially his lectures—"The Absolute and Manifestation"; "The Cosmos: the Macrocosm"; and his American lectures, "The Real and the Apparent Man"; and "Cosmology."

her father. In this we have the very heart of his belief, made warm and personal, and are made to apprehend its bearing, on the fate of our own beloved dead.

A LETTER

"I had a premonition," he writes from Brooklyn, to his bereaved friend, in January 1895, "of your father's giving up the old body, and it is not my custom to write to any one when a wave of would-be inharmonious Maya strikes him. But these are the great turning-points in life, and I know that you are unmoved. The surface of the sea rises and sinks alternately, but to the observant soul, the child of light, each sinking reveals more and more of the depth, and of the beds of pearl and coral at the bottom. Coming and going is all pure delusion. The soul never comes nor goes. Where is the place to which it shall go, when all space is *in the soul*? When shall be the time for entering and departing, when all time is *in the soul*?

"The earth moves, causing the illusion of the movement of the sun ; but the sun does not move. So Prakriti, or Maya, or Nature, is moving, changing, unfolding veil after veil, turning over leaf after leaf of this grand book,—while the witnessing soul drinks in knowledge, unmoved, unchanged. All souls that ever have been, are, or shall be, are all in the present tense, and—to use a material simile—are all standing at one geometrical point. Because the idea of space does not occur in the soul, therefore all that were ours, are ours, and will be ours ; *are* always with us, *were* always with us, and *will be* always with us. We are in them. They are in us.



"Take these cells. Though each separate, they are all, nevertheless, inseparably joined at A B. There they are one. Each is an individual, yet all are one at the axis

A B. None can escape from that axis, and however one may strive to escape from it, yet by standing at the axis, we may enter anyone of the chambers. This axis is the Lord. There, we are one with Him, all in all, and all in God.

"The cloud moves across the face of the moon, creating the illusion that the moon is moving. So nature, body, matter, moves on, creating the illusion that the soul is moving. Thus we find at last that that instinct (or inspiration?) which men of every race, whether high or low, have had, to feel the presence of the departed about them, is true intellectually also".

ALL ONE IN GOD

"Each soul is a star, and all stars are set in that infinite azure, that eternal sky, the Lord. There is the root, the reality, the real individuality, of each and all. Religion began with the search after some of these stars that had passed beyond our horizon, and ended in finding them all in God, and ourselves in the same place. The whole secret is, then, that your father has given up the old garment he was wearing, and is standing where he was, through all eternity. Will he manifest another such garment, in this or any other world? I sincerely pray that he may not, until he does so in full consciousness. I pray that none may be dragged anywhither by the unseen power of his own past actions. I pray that all may be free, that is to say, may know that they are free. And if they are to dream again, let us pray that their dreams be all of peace and bliss."

XXV

SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS

He who crosses a chasm on a narrow plank, is liable at any moment to an abrupt accession of all his ordinary associations and sensations, with a sudden fall from his giddy height. Very like this, seem the stories that we come across in sacred literature, of man's occasional attainment of the mind-world that lies beyond our common experience. Peter, walking on the sea, begins to sink, the moment he remembers where he is. A few weary men, sleeping on a mountain-side, wake to behold their Master transfigured before them. But again they descend into the world, and already the great vision has died away, and become an echoing memory alone. Seated in the fields, watching their flocks by night, and talking in hushed voices on high themes, the shepherds become aware of the presence of angels. The moments pass, and with them the exaltation of hour and place, and lo, the angels have all faded out of the sky! Their hearers are driven to the commonplace expedient of a journey on foot into the neighbouring village, to see what great thing has come to pass.

CONDITIONS OF INSIGHT

In contrast to these, the Indian ideal is that man whose lower mind is so perfectly under his own control that he can at any moment plunge into the thought-ocean, and remain there at will; the man who can be swept along, on irresistible currents of absorption, without the least possibility of a sudden break and unexpected return to the life of the senses! Undoubtedly this power comes nearer, with depth of education and intensity of experience. But the only thing that can make it a man's own, is a self-

command so strict that he can, at will, transcend thought itself. To him who can so concentrate himself as to be able even to suppress it when he will, the mind becomes an obedient servant, a fleet steed, and the body, in its turn, the loyal subject of the mind. Short of such power, there is no perfect, no unwavering self-control. How few must be the persons born to it, in any single generation! There is a luminousness, an assuredness, about the deeds and words of such, which cannot be mistaken. "They speak as those having authority, and not as the scribes."

SAMADHI

We cannot question that Sri Ramakrishna recognised such a soul, "a Brahmajnani from his birth," in the lad Noren, when he first saw him ; recognised too, like a skilled engineer measuring the force of a stream, the height to which his thought-transcendence had already mounted. "Tell me, do you see a light when you are going to sleep?" asked the old man eagerly. "Doesn't everyone?" answered the boy, in wonder. In later life, he would often mention this question, and digress, to describe to us the light he saw. Sometimes it would come as a ball, which a boy was kicking towards him. It would draw near. He would become one with it, and all would be forgotten. Sometimes it was a blaze, into which he would enter. One wonders whether sleep, thus beginning, is slumber at all, in the ordinary sense. At any rate, it is told by the men who were young with Vivekananda, that when he would throw himself down to sleep, their Master, watching his breathing, would often tell the others that he was only apparently resting, and would explain to them what stage of meditation had now been reached. On one such occasion, while Sri Ramakrishna lay ill in the house at Cossipore, Noren had seemed, to one who was about him, to have been sleeping for some hours. when suddenly, towards midnight, he cried out, "Where is my body?" His companion, now known as the old monk Gopal Dada, ran to his aid. and did all he could, by heavy

massage, to restore the consciousness that had been lost, below the head. When all was in vain, and the boy continued in great trouble and alarm, Gopal Dada ran to the Master himself, and told him of his disciple's condition. He smiled when he heard, and said "Let him be! It will do him no harm to stay there for a while. He has teased me enough, to reach that state!" Afterwards he told him and others, that for Noren the Nirvikalpa Samadhi was now over, and his part would henceforth lie in work.

SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS

The Swami himself described the early stages of this experience, later, to his Gurubhai, Saradananda, as an awareness of light, within the brain, which was so intense that he took it for granted that someone had placed a bright lamp close to him, behind his head. Then, we may understand, the moorings of sense-consciousness were cut, and he soared into those realms of which none speaks.

In order to concentrate the mind, it will be understood, it is first of all necessary that we should be able to forget the body. It is for this purpose that asceticism is practised, and austerities undertaken. Throughout his life, a period of strict Tapasya was always a delight to the Swami, who was constantly returning upon this, in spite of the seeming fearlessness with which he took possession of the world. Like a practised rider, touching the reins, or a great musician, running his fingers over the keys, he loved to feel again the response of the body to the will, rejoiced to realise afresh, his own command of his instrument. "I see that I can do *anything*!" he said, when, at the end of his life, having undertaken to go through the hot season in Calcutta without swallowing water,—and being allowed to rinse out the mouth,—he found that the muscles of his throat closed, of their own accord, against the passage of a single drop, and he could not have drunk it, if he would. In his neighbourhood when he was keeping a fast-day, food always seemed to another unnecessary, and difficult to

conceive. I have heard of an occasion when he sat, seeming as if he scarcely heard, surrounded by persons who were quarrelling and disputing. Suddenly an empty tumbler in his hand was crushed into fragments, the only sign he ever gave, of the pain this discussion had caused him!

RULE OF LIFE

It is not easy to realise the severity of the practices on which such a power of self-control had been developed; the number of hours spent in worship and meditation; the fixity of the gaze; the long-sustained avoidance of food and sleep. With regard to this last, indeed, there was one time when he had spent twenty-five days, allowing himself only half-an-hour's sleep, out of every twenty-four hours. And from this half-hour, he awoke himself! Sleep never afterwards, probably, was a very insistent or enduring guest with him. He had the "Yogi's eyes"—as Devendra Nath Tagore had told him, in his childhood, when he climbed into his house-boat on the Ganges, to ask "Sir, have you seen God?"—the "Yogi's eyes," which are said never to shut completely, and to open wide, at the first ray of light. In the West, those staying in the same house with him, would hear the chant of "Para Brahman," or something of the sort, as he went, in the small hours of the morning, to take his early plunge. He never appeared to be practising austerity, but his whole life was a concentration so profound that to anyone else, it would have been the most terrible asceticism. The difficulty with which he stopped the momentum that would carry him into meditation, had been seen by his American friends, in the early days of his life, in that country of railroads and tramways and complicated engagement-lists. "When he sits down to meditate," one of his Indian hosts had said, "it is not ten minutes, before he becomes insensitive, though his body may be black with mosquitoes!" This was the habit he had to control. At first, his lapses into the depths of thought, when people

were perhaps waiting for him at the other end of a journey, caused him much embarrassment. On one occasion, teaching a New York class to meditate, it was found at the end, that he could not be brought back to consciousness, and one by one, his students stole quietly away. But he was deeply mortified when he knew what had happened, and never risked its repetition. Meditating in private, with one or two, he would give a word, by which he could be recalled.

THE DEPTHS OF THOUGHTS

Apart altogether, however, from meditation, he was constantly, always, losing himself in thought. In the midst of the chatter and fun of society, one would notice the eyes grow still, and the breath come at longer and longer intervals; the pause; and then the gradual return. His friends knew these things, and provided for them. If he walked into the house, to pay a call, and forgot to speak; or if he was found in a room, in silence, no one disturbed him; though he would sometimes rise and render assistance to the intruder, without breaking his silence. Thus his interests lay within, and not without. To the scale and range of his thought, his conversation was of course our only clue.

CRITICISM

His talk was always of the impersonal. It was not always religious, as that word goes, any more than his own Master's had been. It was very often secular. But it was always vast. There was never in it anything mean or warped or petty. There was no limitation of sympathy anywhere. Even his criticism was felt merely as definition and analysis. It had no bitterness or resentment in it. "I can criticise even an Avatar," he said of himself one day, "without the slightest diminution of my love for him! But I know quite well that most people are not so; and for them it is safest to protect their own Bhakti!" No senti-

ment of dislike or contempt remained from his analysis, even in the mind of the listener.

This largeness and sweetness of outlook, was firmly based on his reverence for his own Guru. "Mine is the devotion of the dog!" he exclaimed once. "I don't want to know why! I am contented simply to follow!" and Sri Ramakrishna, in his turn, had had a similar feeling for Tota Puri—that great master, who had left his own disciples, at Kaithal, near Umballa, one day, "to go into Lower Bengal, where I feel that a soul needs me." He had gone back to his people again, when his work was done at Dakshineshwar, and his grave in the North-West is honoured to this day. But he whom he had initiated felt for him, ever after, a reverence so great that he would not even utter his name. "Nangta, the Naked One, said unto me—" was his customary way of referring to him. Perfect love for the world and perfect faith in man are only possible, to that heart which has once seen its ideal realised.

THE GREAT TEST

But power to transcend the consciousness of the body is not the only condition of a development like our Master's. It is the Hindu belief that for the evolution of supreme force, it is necessary first to evoke intense energy of emotion, and then to hold this in absolute restraint. This points to a cycle of experience beyond the imagination of most of us, yet an incident in the life of the disciple Noren, gives us a glimpse of it. He was still young, when a sudden death brought about a crisis in the fortunes of his family. Day after day, as the eldest son, he was racked with anxiety on their behalf. The sufferings of those who were dear to him tore his very heart-strings, and the sudden reversal, from ease and prosperity, filled him with perplexity. He could hardly believe in the extent of their disaster.

At last, unable longer to bear the anguish, he fled to his Master, and overwhelmed him with reproaches. The old man listened patiently, and said, with a tender smile,

"Go yonder, my lad, and pray, before the image of Mother. AND WHATEVER YOU ASK HER FOR, SHE WILL ASSUREDLY BESTOW."

Looked at even from the most ordinary point of view, there was nothing wild or extravagant in the promise thus made; for Sri Ramakrishna was surrounded by wealthy disciples, of the Marwari caste, who would have thought no cost too great, to have redeemed his word. The boy, somewhat soothed by the quietness and assurance of the direction, left his presence and went to pray before the image. It was some time before he returned, and when he came, he had a dazed look, say those who were present, and seemed to speak with some difficulty. "Well, did you pray?" asked Sri Ramakrishna. "Oh yes!" answered his disciple.

"And what did you ask Mother to give you?" said the Master.

"The highest Bhakti and Jnanam!" replied Noren.

"Go again," said Sri Ramakrishna, briefly, without further comment, and again he went.

But there was no change. Three times he was sent, to ask for what he would; and three times he came back, with the same reply. Once before the Mother, he had forgotten all else, and could not even remember the cause that had brought him there. Have any of us risen at times to the height where we lose the memory of self, in intensity of prayer for the beloved? If so, we have perhaps gained some measures of the infinitely greater remoteness of this experience, from our common world of relativity and difference.

THOUGHT-CHARACTERISTICS

The Swami's thought soared, as he talked. Is thought itself but one form of expression of the inner Self, the Adi Shakti? And is the force spent in it to be reckoned as lost, from the point of view of the thinker's own good? First, a circle of phenomena; then a circle of thought; lastly, the

Supreme! If so, surely there can be no greater unselfishness than the sharing of their mind-treasure by the great souls, the Maha-purushas. To enter into their dream, must in itself be redemption, for it is the receiving objectively, of a seed that cannot die, till it has become, subjectively, the Beatific Vision!

Ideals were the units of our Master's thought, but ideals made so intensely living that one never thought of them as abstractions. Men and nations alike, were interpreted by him through their ideals, their ethical up-reaching. I have sometimes thought that two different grades of mind are distinguishable, according to their instinct for classification under two heads or three. The Swami's tendency was always to divide into three. Recognising the two extremes of a quality, he never failed to discriminate also that point of junction between them, where, being exactly balanced, both might be said to be non-existent. Is this a universal characteristic of genius, or is it a distinction of Hindu mind?

One never knew what he might see in a thing, never quite knew what might appeal to him. He would often speak in answer to thought, or respond to a thought more easily and effectively than to words. It was only gradually, from a touch here, and a hint there, that one could gather the great preoccupation, that all words and thoughts were designed to serve. It was not till the end of our summer in Kashmir, that he told us how he was always conscious of the form of the Mother, as a bodily presence, visible amongst us. Again, in the last winter of his life, he told his disciple Swarupananda that for some months continuously, he had been conscious of two hands, holding his own in their grasp. Going on a pilgrimage, one would catch him telling his beads. Seated with one's back to him in a carriage one would hear him repeating an invocation over and over. One knew the meaning of his early-morning chant, when, before sending a worker out to the battle, he said, "Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to begin

every day by walking about in his room for a couple of hours, saying 'Satchidananda!' or 'Shivoham!' or some other holy word." This hint, publicly given, was all.

CONSTANT DEVOTION

Constant devotion, then, was the means by which he maintained his unbroken concentration. Concentration was the secret of those incessant flashes of revelation which he was always giving. Like one who had plunged his cup into a deep well, and brought up from it water of a sparkling coldness, was his entrance into a conversation. It was the quality of his thought, quite as much as its beauty or its intensity, that told of the mountain-snows of spiritual vision, whence it was drawn.

Some measure of this concentration was afforded by the stories he would tell of his lecturing experiences. At night, in his own room, a voice, he said, would begin to shout at him the words he was to say on the morrow, and the next day he would find himself repeating on the platform, the things he had heard it tell. Sometimes there would be two voices, arguing with each other. Again the voice would seem to come from a long distance, speaking to him down a great avenue. Then it might draw nearer and nearer, till it would become a shout. "Depend upon it," he would say, "Whatever in the past has been meant by inspiration, it must have been something like this!"

THE MIND THE GURU

In all this, however, he saw no miracle. It was merely the automatic working of the mind, when that had become so saturated with certain principles of thought, as to require no guidance in their application. It was probably an extreme form of the experience to which Hindus refer as the "mind becoming the Guru." It also suggests that, almost perfectly balanced as the two highest senses were in him,

the aural may have had a slight preponderance over the visual. He was, as one of his disciples once said of him, "a most faithful reporter of his own states of mind," and he was never in the slightest danger of attributing these voices to any but a subjective source.

Another experience of which I heard from him, suggesting the same automatic mentality, perhaps in less developed form, was that when any impure thought or image appeared before him, he was immediately conscious of what he called "a blow,"—a shattering, paralysing blow,—struck from within upon the mind itself, as if to say "no! not this way!"

He was very quick to recognise in others those seemingly instinctive actions, that were really dictated by the higher wisdom of super-consciousness. The thing that was right, no one could tell why, while yet it would have seemed, judged by ordinary standards, to have been a mistake,—in such things he saw a higher impulsion. Not all ignorance was in his eyes equally dark.

AN UNEXPECTED ANSWER

His Master's prophecy that again he would eat his mango, of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, when his work was done, was never forgotten, by the brethren of his youth. None at any time knew the moment when the work might be ended, and the mounting realisation some may have suspected. During the last year of his life, a group of his early comrades were one day talking over the old days, and the prophecy that when Noren should realise who and what he had already been, he would refuse to remain in the body, was mentioned. At this, one of them turned to him, half-laughing, "Do you know yet, who you were, Swamiji?" he said. "Yes, I know now," was the unexpected answer, awing them into earnestness and silence, and no one could venture at that time to question him further.

As the end came nearer, meditation and austerity took

up more and more of life. Even those things that had interested him most, elicited now only a far-away concern. And in the last hour, when the supreme realisation was reached, some ray of its vast super-conscious energy seemed to touch many of those who loved him, near and far. One dreamt that Sri Ramakrishna had died again that night, and woke in the dawn to hear the messenger at his gate. Another, amongst the closest friends of his boyhood, had a vision of his coming in triumph and saying, "Shoshi! Shoshi! I have spat out the body!" and still a third, drawn irresistibly in that evening hour to the place of meditation. found the soul face to face with an infinite radiance, and fell prostrate before it, crying out "Shiva Guru!"

XXVI

THE PASSING OF THE SWAMI

LATE in the year 1900, the Swami broke off from the party of friends with whom he was travelling in Egypt, and went home suddenly, to India. "He seemed so tired!" says one of those who were with him at this time, As he looked upon the Pyramids and the Sphinx, and the rest of the great sights in the neighbourhood of Cairo, it was in truth like one who knew himself to be turning the last pages in the book of experience! Historic monuments no longer had the power to move him deeply.

He was cut to the quick, on the other hand, to hear the people of the country referred to constantly as "natives," and to find himself associated, in his visit, rather with the foreigner than with them. In this respect, indeed, it would seem that he had enjoyed his glimpse of Constantinople vastly more than Egypt, for towards the end of his life he was never tired of talking about a certain old Turk who kept an eating-house there, and had insisted on giving entertainment without price to the party of strangers, one of whom came from India. So true it was, that to the oriental, untouched by modern secularity, all travellers were pilgrims, and all pilgrims guests.

In the winter that followed, he paid a visit to Dacca, in East Bengal, and took a large party up the Brahmaputra, to make certain pilgrimages in Assam. How rapidly his health was failing at this time, only those immediately around him knew. None of us who were away, had any suspicion. He spent the summer of 1901 at Belur, 'hoping to hear again the sound of the rains, as they fell in his boyhood!' And when the winter again set in, he was so ill as to be confined to bed.

BODH-GAYA AND BENARES

Yet he made one more journey, lasting through January and February 1902, when he went, first to Bodh-Gaya and next to Benares. It was a fit end to all his wanderings. He arrived at Bodh-Gaya on the morning of his last birthday, and nothing could have exceeded the courtesy and hospitality of the Mahunt. Here, as afterwards at Benares, the confidence and affection of the orthodox world were brought to him in such measure and freedom that he himself stood amazed at the extent of his empire in men's hearts. Bodh-Gaya, as it was now the last, had also been the first, of the holy places he had set out to visit. And it had been in Benares, some few years later that he had said farewell to one, with the words, "Till that day when I fall on society like a thunderbolt I shall visit this place no more!"

Many of his disciples from distant parts of the world gathered round the Swami on his return to Calcutta. Ill as he looked, there was none, probably, who suspected how near the end had come. Yet visits were paid, and farewells exchanged, that it had needed voyages half round the world to make. Strangely enough, in his first conversation after coming home from Benares, his theme was the necessity of withdrawing himself for a time, in order to leave those that were about him a free hand.

"How often," he said, "does a man ruin his disciples, by remaining always with them! When men are once trained, it is essential that their leader leave them, for without his absence they cannot develop themselves!"

SOCIAL IDEALS

It was as the result of the last of those foreign contacts that had continued without intermission throughout his mature life, that he realised suddenly the value to religion of high ideals of faithfulness in marriage. To the monk, striving above all things to be true to his own vows, not only in word and deed, but still more earnestly and

arduously, in thought itself, the ideals of social life are apt to appear as so much waste material. Suddenly the Swami saw that a people to whom chastity was not precious could never hope to produce a faithful priesthood, or a great monastic order. Only where the inviolability of marriage was fully recognised, could the path that lay outside marriage be truthfully held. By the sacredness of the social ideal, was the holiness of the super-social rendered possible.

This realisation was the crown of his philosophy. It could not but mark the end of "the play of Mother." The whole of society was necessary, with its effort and its attainment, to create the possibility of the life of Sannyas. The faithful householder was as essential to the Sanatan Dharma as the faithful monk. The inviolability of marriage and the inviolability of the monastic vow, were obverse and reverse of a single medal. Without noble citizenship, there could be no mighty apostolate. Without the secular, no sacerdotal, without temporal, no spiritual. Thus all was one, yet no detail might be wilfully neglected, for through each atom shone the whole. It was in fact his own old message in a new form. Integrity of character, as he and his Master before him, had insisted, was a finer offering than religious ecstasy. Without strength to hold, there was no achievement in surrender.

For the sake of the work that constantly opened before him, the Swami made a great effort, in the spring of 1902, to recover his health and even undertook a course of treatment under which, throughout April, May, and June, he was not allowed to swallow a drop of cold water. How far this benefited him physically, one does not know; but he was overjoyed to find the unflawed strength of his own will, in going through the ordeal.

FORE-KNOWLEDGE

When June closed, however, he knew well enough that the end was near. "I am making ready for death,"

he said to one who was with him, on the Wednesday before he died. "A great Tapasya and meditation has come upon me, and I am making ready for death."

And we who did not dream that he would leave us, till at least some three or four years had passed, knew nevertheless that the words were true. News of the world met but a far-away rejoinder from him at this time. Even a word of anxiety as to the scarcity of the rains, seemed almost to pass him by as in a dream. It was useless to ask him now for an opinion on the questions of the day. "You may be right," he said quietly, "but I cannot enter any more into these matters. I am going down into death."

Once in Kashmir, after an attack of illness I had seen him lift a couple of pebbles, saying, "Whenever death approaches me, all weakness vanishes. I have neither fear, nor doubt, nor thought of the external. I simply busy myself making ready to die. I am as hard as *that*"—and the stones struck one another in his hand—"for I *have* touched the feet of God!"

Personal revelation was so rare with him, that these words could never be forgotten. Again, on returning from the cave of Amarnath, in that same summer of 1898, had he not said, laughingly, that he had there received the grace of Amarnath—not to die till he himself should will to do so? Now this, seeming to promise that death would never take him by surprise, had corresponded so well with the prophecy of Sri Ramakrishna—that when he should know who and what he was, he would refuse to remain a moment longer in the body—that one had banished from one's mind all anxiety on this score, and even his own grave and significant words at the present time did not suffice to revive it.

Did we not remember, moreover, the story of the great Nirvikalpa Samadhi of his youth, and how, when it was over, his Master had said, "This is your mango. Look! I lock it in my box. You shall taste it once more, when your work is finished."

"——And we may wait for that," said the monk who told me the tale. "We shall know when the time is near. For he will tell us that again he has tasted his mango."

How strange it seems now, looking back on that time, to realise in how many ways the expected hint was given, only to fall on ears that did not hear, to reach minds that could not understand!

THE WORK

It would seem, indeed, that in his withdrawal from all weakness and attachment, there was one exception. That which had ever been dearer to him than life, kept still its power to move him. It was on the last Sunday before the end that he said to one of his disciples, "You know the WORK is always my weak point! When I think *that* might come to an end, I am all undone!"

On Wednesday of the same week, the day being Ekadashi, and himself keeping the fast in all strictness. he insisted on serving the morning meal to the same disciple. Each dish as it was offered—boiled seeds of the jack-fruit, boiled potatoes, plain rice, and ice-cold milk—formed the subject of playful chat: and finally, to end the meal, he himself poured the water over the hands, and dried them with a towel.

"It is I who should do these things for you, Swamiji! Not you, for me!" was the protest naturally offered. But his answer was startling in its solemnity—"Jesus washed the *feet* of His disciples!"

Something checked the answer "But that was the *last* time!" as it rose to the lips, and the words remained unuttered. This was well. For here also, the last time had come.

THE PLAY OF LIFE

There was nothing sad or grave about the Swami, during these days. In the midst of anxiety about over-fatiguing him, in spite of conversation deliberately kept

as light as possible, touching only upon the animals that surrounded him, his garden, experiments, books and absent friends, over and beyond all this, one was conscious the while of a luminous presence, of which his bodily form seemed only as a shadow, or symbol. Never had one felt so strongly as now, before him, that one stood on the threshold of an infinite light. Yet none was prepared, least of all on that last happy Friday, July the 4th, on which he appeared so much stronger and better than he had been for years, to see the end so soon.

He had spent hours of that day in formal meditation. Then he had given a long Sanskrit lesson. Finally he had taken a walk from the monastery gates to the distant highroad.

On his return from this walk, the bell was ringing for evensong, and he went to his own room, and sat down, facing towards the Ganges, to meditate. It was the last time. The moment was come that had been foretold by his Master from the beginning. Half an hour went by, and then, on the wings of that meditation, his spirit soared whence there could be no return, and the body was left, like a folded vesture, on the earth.

XXVII

THE END

Towards Christmas of the year 1902, a few of the Swami Vivekananda's disciples gathered at Khandagiri near Cuttack to keep the festival. It was evening, and we sat on the grass, round a lighted log, while on one side of us rose the hills, with their caves and carven rocks, and all around us whispered the sleeping forest. We were to keep Christmas Eve, in the old-time fashion of the Order of Ramakrishna. One of the monks held a long crook, and we had with us a copy of the Gospel of St. Luke, wherewith to read and picture the coming of the angels, and the singing of the world's first Gloria.*

We lost ourselves in the story, however, and the reading could not be stopped at Christmas Eve, but must needs drift on from point to point. The Great Life as a whole was passed in review; then the Death; and finally the Resurrection. We turned to the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel, and read incident after incident.

But the tale sounded as never before, in our ears. Instead of a legal document, dated and attested, whose credibility must stand or fall by the clearness and coherence of its various parts, it read now like the gasping, stammering witness of one who had striven to put on record the impalpable and the intangible. The narrative of the Resurrection was no longer, for us, an account of an event, to be accepted or rejected. It had taken its place for evermore as a spiritual perception, which one who experienced it had striven, not always successfully, to put into words. The whole chapter sounded fragmentary, cumulative, like

* Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men! The Song of the Angels.

some longing attempt to convince, not the reader only, but even, to some extent, the writer himself.

THE RESURRECTION-TALE

For had we not had our own glimmerings of a like back-coming to put beside it? One remembered and understood suddenly, the clear and deliberate statement of our Master himself—"Several times in my life I have seen returning spirits; and once—in the week after the death of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa—the form was luminous."

We were face to face, not merely with the longing of the disciples to see once more the Master who had gone from them, but with the far deeper yearning of the Incarnation, to return again to comfort and bless the disciples He had left.

"Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?"—How many moments of such exaltation had we ourselves not known, in the first weeks after the passing of the Master, when we would fain have believed that his actual presence had been with us!

"He was known unto them in the breaking of bread."—Even so. Only a touch here, a word there, a moment of sweetness, or a flash of inner clearness and knowledge, any of these had been sufficient, at various times in those early weeks, to bring back the throbbing awareness of the beloved presence, with the mingling of doubt and assurance in its poignant longing.

We passed over, that night at Khandagiri, those features of the Resurrection that would seem to have been added later by minds that believed in the hard and fast, black and white, character of the story. It was the older record, shining through this palimpsest, on which our thoughts were fastened, that simple old record, full of the pathos of sudden sights and vanishings, with its gatherings of the Eleven, whispering amongst themselves. "The Lord is risen indeed!" with its tale, at the last, of a parting in the midst of a benediction.

A PRESENCE BEYOND DEATH

It was not of any re-appearances of the body at all, as it seemed to us reading, that this older story had told, but of sudden and unforeseen meetings of the will, returns of thought and love, brief upliftings of prayer, from One who in the Vedic phrase, had been 'resumed into His shining Self,' and moved now on subtler and more penetrative planes of action than we, entangled amidst the senses, could conceive.

Nor were they so objective that all alike might be equally conscious of these fleeting gleams, half-seen, half-heard. The grosser perception they passed by altogether. Even to the finest, they were matters to be questioned, to be discussed eagerly, to be pieced together in sequence, and cherished tenderly in the heart. Amongst the closest and most authoritative of the apostles, there might well be some who doubted altogether. And yet, and yet, in the midst of the caves and forests of Khandagiri that night, we who followed the Christian story of the Resurrection, could not but feel that behind it, and through it, glistened a thread of fact; that we were tracing out the actual footsteps left by a human soul somewhere, somewhen, as it trod the glimmering pathway of this fugitive experience. So we believed, so we felt, because, in all its elusiveness, a like revelation, at a like time, had made itself evident to us also.

May God grant that this living presence of our Master, of which death itself had not had power to rob us, become never, to us his disciples, as a thing to be remembered, but remain with us always in its actuality, even unto the end!

THE END

APPENDIX

Selected unpublished pages of a manuscript entitled *The Swami Vivekananda* dated August 6, 1904, when Sister Nivedita first made an attempt to write about him.

It is after long thought and many questions that I at last take up my pen to write. Should I tell the story of your life, beloved Master? Alas, I cannot. You satisfied so many, widely diverse, in such widely diverse ways. Who am I, that I should understand it all? In what form do you appeal most deeply to the heart of India? to the Orthodox? to the Modern? Is it when, in your babyhood, you sit playing at the meditation of the Shiva-Yogi, or become intoxicated at the call of the begging Bairagi? Or is it in more later years when you pass down the roadway, bowl in hand, begging from door to door? Or is it again, when you stand on a platform in a distant land, opening the treasures of your race to aliens, and through your utterance India hears the bell-note of her own name?

Or in what form does your western world most love you? How did the Americans see you? How did you show yourself to the Englishman? Only one whose own hands ranged over as wide a keyboard, could interpret adequately the music that you made.

Therefore, I have given up the idea of attempting to write your life, and am content to record the story of my own vision and understanding only. How it began, how it grew, what memories I gathered ; my tale will be a record of fragments, and no more. Yet do I pray that through this broken utterance some word of yours may here and there be heard—some glimpse caught of the greatness of your Heart.

It was so great, this life whose story I desire to tell, that I know I shall fail in my attempt to tell it. Our Master was strong in so many different ways, and I cannot

hope to reveal more than one or two. Weakness or vanity always perished in his presence. He often seemed unnecessarily serene. And yet simplicity and ignorance would be completely at ease and servants in every country worshipped him. And sometimes, years after, when opportunity has been given to a hearer to prove himself, I have had reason to understand the wisdom of his condemnations. Things like this, one can best explain by going back to the stories that are told by the disciples of *his* Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. For it often seems to me that these two are but one soul, working out in different spheres, on different problems, the same force, or the same solution.

We are told that Sri Ramakrishna would refuse to touch a place in which someone had sat or food sent by him, saying that the person was "unholy". And when everyone would protest that the man in question was of remarkably pious habits, he would say only "wait and see!" And it would prove that the man's whole life was a deception, a whited sepulchre, perhaps. Facts never hitherto suspected would come to light, proving Sri Ramakrishna to have been in the right.

"There are times," He said of Himself "when men are like glass before Me. I look them through and through." His disciples all say that they never knew Him to make a mistake.

Sri Ramakrishna's life was lived and his work done within very narrow geographical limits, and entirely under the conditions of Hindu Education. The Swami Vivekananda's covered a great part of the world. He had to deal with persons of widely differing associations and habits of thought. His insight, therefore, was not often exercised upon such simple questions as those of domestic life and truth, but dealt rather with matters which the world is accustomed to consider more important. The sequences with which his thought was occupied were vaster and covered longer intervals. Many of his previsions therefore still await fulfilment. Yet I have seen enough to believe that

he saw from the inside, much as Sri Ramakrishna did, and that when he condemned, it was for good reason, ultimately to approve itself to all.

I have said that meanness or vanity could not endure before him. Not that he spoke in scorn or anger. Sometimes he was courteous, sometimes he was silent. Sometimes he would express an opinion. But oftenest, and I think perhaps easiest to understand were there occasions when he was simply quiet, and one sitting by would feel as if a light had suddenly been brought into a dark room. Men were *placed*. As a rule, his spoken opinions have taken me longer to verify and accept, have been, I suppose, less powerful, than this silent assize of thought.

And yet this was only one side. On another, he was exceedingly simple, and could easily be misled. This was generally with regard to the idea that people were starving, and required his assistance. As long as he thought this, he would never lose sight of them.

* * *

30-4-05.

When I consider how great the task, and how little and infinitely astray the performance, how high the ideal, and how pitiful the attempt, I might feel discouraged. But then again, who knows of how many lives those that we call Teresa, Francis, Martin Luther may have been but the culminating event? Could Christianity, or the thought or feeling that is Christianity, have produced at once these wondrous souls? Did they grow to what they were in the short space of a single lifetime? Why then should we not have patience, we who believe that another event as great as birth of Christianity has recurred? Why should we not have patience with ourselves as well as others? Hidden amongst ourselves may be the saints heroes and self-sacrificing martyrs of centuries hence.

We stand on the threshold of a new Era in the World-Faith.

* * *

On the altar shelf above my desk stand three objects—symbols of adoration. One of these, to the right, is a broken statue, picked up and brought to me from amongst the rubbish—heaps and brick-bats of Sarnath last year. It consists only of two feet, folded in the posture of meditation. And it stands to me for the call of Humanity upon our love and service. Are not all human loves as the Feet of the Lord? In the middle is a brass image of the Buddha, probably of Burmese workmanship, but stolen, I fear, in the Loot of Syangtse. And to the left stand the pictures of our great Gurus, Sri Ramakrishna and the Swami Vivekananda. The Swami is photographed as an Indian Sannyasin seated, but not in meditation, with shaven head and bare feet. Before him lie the staff and Kamandalu of his wandering life, and a few palms and a book represent the desire of his disciples.

* * *

On the altar shelf above my desk stands a brass Buddha, looking down on me, as I write, in eternal calm. And not my Master's own picture, to the right, is so like him, in his great moments, as this image, which expresses the centuries-long adoration of an Indian man, by foreign peoples. Nor is the likeness a matter purely of my own imagination. For others, who knew him, coming in by chance, have been known to remark it. Here sits the Master, lost in meditation. And we know, as we look, that with these eyes we also have looked upon one of the Line, with these very ears we have heard the teachings of a Buddha.

* * *

I propose in this life of my Master to tell only what I have myself seen, or what has to my thinking some special relevances to that which I have seen, that which has interested myself. I shall therefore leave on one side many things which to others may seem as significant as what I tell.

* * *

They were short enough, those golden months, in which I had the good fortune to be one of the inner ring of his disciples. Taken in bulk, they would not perhaps make two years in all, though they were spread out over a period of four and a half. Yet they left, as they went, so clear a sense of the Eternal, they were so deeply fraught with the secret of an existence that is not transient or limited, that to this day I cannot think of them as passed, nor believe that even the hours of worth into a new measure of life and work could long avail to dim the ineffable memory of that time.

NOTES OF SOME WANDERINGS WITH THE SWÂMI VIVEKÂNANDA

NOTES OF SOME WANDERINGS WITH THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

FOREWORD

Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda; Gurubhais; and disciples.
A party of European guests and disciples, amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the Steady Mother; One whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.
Place :— Different parts of India.
Time :— The year 1898.

BEAUTIFUL have been the days of this year. In them the Ideal has become the Real. First in our river-side cottage at Belur; then in the Himalayas, at Naini Tal and Almora; afterwards wandering here and there through Kashmir;—everywhere have come hours never to be forgotten, words that will echo through our lives for ever, and, once at least, a glimpse of the Beatific Vision.

It has been all play.

We have seen a love that would be one with the hum-

blest and most ignorant, seeing the world for the moment through his eyes, as if criticism were not ; we have laughed over the colossal caprice of genius ; we have warmed ourselves at heroic fires ; and we have been present, as it were, at the awakening of the Holy Child.

But there has been nothing grim or serious about any of these things. Pain has come close to all of us. Solemn anniversaries have been and gone. But sorrow was lifted into a golden light, where it was made radiant, and did not destroy.

Fain, if I could, would I describe our journeys. Even as I write I see the irises in bloom at Baramulla ; the young rice beneath the poplars at Islamabad ; starlight scenes in Himalayan forests ; and the royal beauties of Delhi and the Taj. One longs to attempt some memorial of these. It would be worse than useless. Not, then, in words, but in the light of memory, they are enshrined for ever, together with the kindly and gentle folk who dwell among them, and whom we trust always to have left the gladder for our coming.

We have learnt something of the mood in which new faiths are born, and of the Persons who inspire such faiths. For we have been with one who drew all men to him.—listening to all, feeling with all, and refusing none. We have known a humility that wiped out all littleness, a renunciation that would die for scorn of oppression and pity of the oppressed, a love that would bless even the oncoming feet of torture and of death. We have joined hands with that woman who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. We have lacked, not the occasion, but her passionate unconsciousness of self.

Seated under a tree in the garden of dead emperors there came to us a vision of all the rich and splendid things of Earth, offering themselves as a shrine for the great of soul. The storied windows of cathedrals, and the jewelled thrones of kings, the banners of great captains and the

vestments of the priests, the pageants of cities, and the retreats of the proud,—all came, and all were rejected.

In the garments of the beggar, despised by the alien, worshipped by the people, we have seen him; and only the bread of toil, the shelter of cottage-roofs, and the common road across the cornfields seem real enough for the background to this life . . . . Amongst his own, the ignorant loved him as much as scholars and statesmen. The boatmen watched the river, in his absence, for his return, and servants disputed with guests to do him service. And through it all, the veil of playfulness was never dropped. "They played with the Lord," and instinctively they knew it.

To those who have known such hours, life is richer and sweeter, and in the long nights even the wind in the palm-trees seems to cry—

"Mahadeva! Mahadeva! Mahadeva!"

Chapter I

THE HOUSE ON THE GANGES

Place :— A cottage at Belur, besides the Ganges.
Time :— March to May, 11th.

Of the home by the Ganges, the Master had said to one "You will find that little house of Dhira Mata like heaven, for it is all love, from beginning to end."

It was so indeed. Within, an unbroken harmony, and without, everything alike beautiful,—the green stretch of grass, the tall cocoanut palms, the little brown villages in the jungle, and the Nilkantha that built her nest in a tree-top beside us, on purpose to bring us the blessings of Shiva. In the morning, the shadows lay behind the house; but in the afternoons we could sit in front, worshipping the Ganges herself,—great leonine mother!—and in sight of Dakshineshwar.

There came one and another with traditions of the past; and we learnt of the Master's eight years' wanderings; of the name changed from village to village; of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi; and of that sacred sorrow, too deep for words, or for common sight, that one who loved had alone seen. And there, too, came the Master Himself. with his stories of Uma and Shiva, of Radha and Krishna, and his fragments of song and poetry.

It seemed as if he knew that the first material of a new consciousness must be a succession of vivid, but isolated experiences, poured out without proper sequence, so as to provoke the mind of the learner to work for its own conception of order and relation. At any rate, whether he knew it or not, this was the canon of educational science that he unconsciously fulfilled. For the most part, it was the Indian religions that he portrayed for us, today dealing

THE HOUSE ON THE GANGES
Photo taken in 1899

IN KASHMIR

Jaya, Dhira Mata, Swami Vivekananda, Nivedita

with one, and tomorrow with another, his choice guided, seemingly, by the whim of the moment. But it was not religion only that he poured out upon us. Sometimes it would be history. Again, it would be folklore. On still another occasion, it would be the manifold anomalies and inconsistencies of race, caste, and custom. In fact India herself became, as heard in him, as the last and noblest of the Puranas, uttering itself through his lips.

Another point in which he had caught a great psychological secret was that of never trying to soften for us that which would at first sight be difficult or repellent. In matters Indian he would rather put forward, in its extreme form, at the beginning of our experience, all that it might seem impossible for European minds to enjoy. Thus he would quote, for instance, some verse about Gouri and Shankar in a single form—

"On one side grows the hair in long black curls.
And on the other, corded like rope.
On one side are seen the beautiful garlands,
On the other, bone earrings and snake-like coils.
One side is white with ashes, like the snow mountains,
The other, golden as the light of dawn.
For He, the Lord, took a form,
And that was a divided form,
Half-woman and half-man."

And carried by his burning enthusiasm it was possible to enter into these things, and dimly, even then, to apprehend their meaning.

Whatever might be the subject of the conversation, it ended always on the note of the Infinite. Indeed I do not know that our Master's realisation of the Adwaita Philosophy has been in anything more convincing than in this matter of his interpretation of the world. He might appear to take up any subject, literary, ethnological, or scientific, but he always made us feel it as an illustration

of the Ultimate Vision. There was, for him, nothing secular. He had a loathing for bondage, and a horror of those who "cover chains with flowers", but he never failed to make the true critic's distinction between this and the highest forms of art. One day we were receiving European guests, and he entered into a long talk about Persian poetry. Then suddenly, finding himself quoting the poem that says, "For one mole on the face of my Beloved, I would give all the wealth of Samarcand!" he turned and said energetically "I would not give a straw, you know, for the man who was incapable of appreciating a love song!" His talk, too, teemed with epigrams. It was that same afternoon, in the course of a long political argument, that he said, "In order to become a nation, it appears that *we need a common hate* as well as a common love."

Several months later he remarked that before one who had a mission he never talked of any of the gods save Uma and Shiva. For Shiva and the Mother made the great workers. Yet I have sometimes wondered if he knew at this time how the end of every theme was Bhakti. Much as he dreaded the luxury of spiritual emotion for those who might be enervated by it, he could not help giving glimpses of what it meant to be consumed with the intoxication of God. And so he would chant for us such poems as—

"They have made Radha queen, in the beautiful groves
of Brindaban.
At her gate stands Krishna, on guard.
His flute is singing all the time:
'Radha is about to distribute infinite wealth of love.
Though I am guard, all the world may enter.
Come all ye who thirst! Say only 'Glory unto Radha!'
Enter the region of love!'"

Or he would give us the great antiphonal Chorus of the Cowherds, written by his friend:*

* The late Bengali dramatist, Babu Girish Chandra Ghose.

Men. 'Thou art the Soul of souls,
Thou yellow garbed,
With thy blue eyes.
Women. Thou dark One! Thou Shepherd of Brindavana!
Kneeling at the feet of the Shepherdesses.
Men. My soul sing the praise of the glory of the Lord,
Who took the human form.
Women. Thy beauty for us, the Gopis.
Men. Thou Lord of Sacrifice, Saviour of the weak.
Women. Who lovest Radha and thy body floats on its own tears.'

One such day (May, 9) we can never forget. We had been sitting talking under the trees, when suddenly a storm came on. We moved to the terrace, overhanging the river, and then to the verandah. Not a moment too soon. Within ten minutes, the opposite bank of the Ganges was hidden from our view, and in the blackness before us we could hear the rain falling in torrents, and the thunder crashing, while every now and then there was a lurid flash of lightning.

And yet, amidst all the turmoil of the elements, we sat on, in our little verandah, absorbed in a drama far more intense. One form passed back and forth across our tiny stage; one voice compassed all the players; and the play that was acted before us was the love of the soul for God!. . . . . Till we, too, caught the kindling, and loved for the moment with a fire that the rushing river could not put out nor the hurricane disturb. "Shall many, waters quench Love, or the floods overwhelm it?" And before Prometheus left us, we knelt before him together and he blest us all.

March, 17.

One day, early in the cottage-life, the Swami took the Dhira Mata, and her whose name was Jaya, to be received

for the first time by Sarada Devi, who had come from her village home, to Calcutta, at his call. Thence they brought back with them for a few hours, a guest to whom the memory of that day makes one of life's great festivals. Never can she forget the fragrance of the Ganges, nor the long talk with the Master, nor the service Jaya had done that morning by winning the most orthodox of Hindu women to eat with her foreign disciples ; nor any one of the many happy ties that that day brought into existence and consecrated.

March, 25.

A week later the same guest was there again, coming late on Wednesday, and going away on Saturday evening. At this time, the Swami kept the custom of coming to the cottage early, and spending the morning-hours there, and again returning in the late afternoon. On the second morning of this visit, however,—Friday, the Christian feast of the Annunciation,—he took us all three back to the Math, and there, in the worship-room, was held a little service of initiation, where one was made a Brahmacharini. That was the happiest of mornings. After the service, we were taken upstairs. The Swami put on the ashes and bone-earrings and matted locks of a Shiva-yogi, and sang and played to us—Indian music on Indian instruments,—for an hour.

And in the evening, in our boat on the Ganges, he opened his heart to us, and told us much of his questions and anxieties regarding the trust that he held from his own Master.

Another week, and he was gone to Darjeeling, and till the day that the plague declaration brought him back we saw him again no more.

May, 3.

Then two of us met him in the house of our Holy Mother. The political sky was black. It seemed as if the

storm so long expected were about to burst. The moon of those evenings had the brown haze about it that is said to betoken civil disturbance—and already plague, panic, and riot were doing their fell work. And the Master turned to the two and said, "There are some who scoff at the existence of Kali. Yet today She is out there amongst the people. They are frantic with fear, and the soldiery have been called to deal out death. Who can say that God does not manifest Himself as Evil as well as Good? But only the Hindu dares to worship Him in the evil."

He had come back, and the old life was resumed once more, as far as could be, seeing that an epidemic was in prospect, and that measures were on hand to give the people confidence. As long as this possibility darkened the horizon, he would not leave Calcutta. But it passed away, and those happy days with it, and the time came that we should go.

Chapter II

AT NAINI TAL AND ALMORA

Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda ; Gurubhais, and disciples.
A party of Europeans, amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the Steady Mother ; One whose name was Jaya ; and Nivedita.
Place :— The Himalayas.
Time :— May 11 to May 25, 1898.

May, 11

We were a large party, or, indeed, two parties, that left Howrah station on Wednesday evening, and on Friday morning came in sight of the Himalayas. They seemed to rise suddenly out of the plains, a few hundred yards away.

May, 14 to 16.

Naini Tal was made beautiful by three things,— the Master's pleasure in introducing to us his disciple, the Raja of Khetri ; the dancing girls who met us and asked us where to find him, and were received by him, in spite of the remonstrances of others ; and by the Mohammedan gentleman who said, "Swamiji, if in aftertimes any claim you as an Avatar, remember that I, a Mohammedan, am the first!"

It was here, too, that we heard a long talk on Ram Mohun Roy, in which he pointed out three things as the dominant notes of this teacher's message, his acceptance of the Vedanta, his preaching of patriotism, and the love that embraced the Mussulman equally with the Hindu. In all these things, he claimed himself to have taken up the task that the breadth and foresight of Ram Mohun Roy had mapped out.

The incident of the dancing girls occurred in consequence of our visit to the two temples at the head of the tarn, which from time immemorial have been places of pilgrimage, making the beautiful little "Eye Lake" holy. Here, offering worship, we found two nautch-women. When they had finished, they came up to us, and we in broken language, entered into conversation with them. We took them for respectable ladies of the town, and were much astonished, later, at the storm which had evidently passed over the Swami's audience at his refusal to have them turned away. Am I mistaken in thinking that it was in connection with these dancing-women of Naini Tal that he first told us the story, many times repeated, of the nautch-girl of Khetri? He had been angry at the invitation to see her, but being prevailed upon to come, she sang—

"O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, Same-Sightedness,
Make us both the same Brahman!

One piece of iron is the knife in the head of the butcher,
And another piece of iron is the image in the temple.
But when they touch the philosopher's stone,
Both alike turn to gold!

One drop of water is in the sacred Jamuna,
And one is foul in a ditch by the roadside.
But when they fall into the Ganges,
Both alike become holy!

So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-Sightedness.
Make us both the same Brahman!"

And then, said the Master of himself, the scales fell from his eyes, and seeing that all are indeed one, he condemned no more.

And she whose name is Jaya, heard from another of this same visit, when to the assembled women he spoke words of power that moved all hearts,——full of love and tenderness, without separation and without reproach.

Monday, May, 16.

It was late in the afternoon when we left Naini Tal for Almora, and night overtook us while still travelling through the forest. On and on we went, following the road into deep gullies, and out again, round the shoulders of projecting hillsides, always under the shadow of great trees, and always preceded by torches and lanterns to keep off bears and tigers. While day lasted we had seen the "rose-forests" and the maiden-hair fern by the spring sides, and the scarlet blossoms on the wild pomegranate bushes: but with nightfall, only the fragrance of these and the honeysuckles was left to us, and we journeyed on, content to know nothing, save silence and starlight, and the grandeur of the mountains—till we reached a quaintly placed dak-bungalow, on the mountain side, in the midst of trees. There after sometime, Swamiji arrived with his party full of fun, and keen in his appreciation of everything that concerned the comfort of his guests, but full before all, of the poetry of the weird "night scenes" without, the coolies by their fires, and the neighing horses, the Poor Man's Shelter near, and the whispering trees and solemn blackness of the forest.

Tuesday, May, 17.

From the day that we arrived at Almora the Swami renewed his habit of coming over to us at our early breakfast, and spending some hours in talk. Then and always, he was an exceedingly light sleeper, and I imagine that his visit to us, early as the hour might be, was often paid

during the course of his return with his monks from a still earlier walk. Sometimes, but rarely, we saw him again in the evening, either meeting him when out for a walk, or going ourselves to Capt. Sevier's where he and his party were staying, and seeing him there. And once he came at that time to call on us.

Into these morning talks at Almora, a strange new element, painful but salutary to remember, had crept. There appeared to be, on one side, a curious bitterness and distrust, and, on the other, irritation and defiance. The youngest of the Swami's disciples at this time, it must be remembered, was an English woman, and of how much this fact meant intellectually,—what a strong bias it implied, and always does imply, in the reading of India, what an idealism of the English race and all their deeds and history,—the Swami himself had had no conception till the day after her initiation at the monastery. Then he had asked her some exultant question, as to which nation she now belonged to, and had been startled to find with what a passion of loyalty and worship she regarded the English flag, giving to it much of the feeling that an Indian woman would give to her Thakoor. His surprise and disappointment at the moment were scarcely perceptible. A startled look, no more. Nor did his discovery of the superficial way in which this disciple had joined herself with his people in any degree affect his confidence and courtesy during the remaining weeks spent in the plains. But with Almora, it seemed as if a going-to-school, had commenced, and just as schooling is often disagreeable to the taught, so here, though it cost infinite pain, the blindness of a half-view must be done away. A mind must be brought to change its centre of gravity. It was never more than this; never the dictating of opinion or creed; never more than emancipation from partiality. Even at the end of the terrible experience, when this method, as regarded race and country, was renounced, never to be taken up systematically again, the Swami did not call for any confes-

sion of faith, any declaration of new opinion. He dropped the whole question. His listener went free. But he had revealed a different standpoint in thought and feeling, so completely and so strongly as to make it impossible for her to rest, until later, by her own labours, she had arrived at a view in which both these partial presentments stood rationalised and accounted for. "Really, patriotism like yours is sin!" he exclaimed once, many weeks later, when the process of obtaining an uncoloured judgment on some incident had been more than commonly exasperating. "All that I want you to see is that most people's actions are the expression of self-interest, and you constantly oppose to this the idea that a certain race are all angels. Ignorance so determined is wickedness!" Another question on which this same disciple showed a most bitter obstinacy was that of the current western estimate of woman. Both these limitations of her sympathy look petty and vulgar enough to her now, as compared with the open and disinterested attitude of the mind that welcomes truth. But at the time they were a veritable lion in the path, and remained so until she had grasped the folly of allowing anything whatever to obscure to her the personality that was here revealing itself. Once having seen this, it was easy to be passive to those things that could not be accepted, or could not be understood, and to leave to time the formation of ultimate judgments regarding them. In every case it had been some ideal of the past that had raised a barrier to the movement of her sympathy, and surely it is always so. It is the worships of one era which forge the fetters of the next.

These morning talks at Almora then, took the form of assaults upon deep-rooted preconceptions, social, literary, and artistic, or of long comparisons of Indian and European history and sentiments, often containing extended observations of very great value. One characteristic of the Swami was the habit of attacking the abuses of a country or society openly and vigorously when he was in its midst, whereas

after he had left it, it would often seem as if nothing but its virtues were remembered by him. He was always testing his disciples, and the manner of these particular discourses was probably adopted in order to put to the proof the courage and sincerity of one who was both woman and European.

Chapter III

MORNING TALKS AT ALMORA

Place :— Almora.
Time :— May and June, 1898.

Wednesday, May, 18.

The first morning, the talk was of the central ideals of civilization,—in the West, truth, in the East, chastity. He justified Hindu marriage-customs, as springing from the pursuit of this ideal, and from the woman's need of protection, in combination. And he traced out the relation of the whole subject to the Philosophy of the Absolute.

Another morning he began by observing that as there were four main castes,—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Bunea, Shudra,—so there were four great national functions, the religious or priestly, fulfilled by the Hindus; the military, by the Roman Empire; the mercantile by England today; and the democratic by America in the future. And here he launched off into a glowing prophetic forecast of how America would yet solve the problems of the Shudra,—the problems of freedom and co-operation,—and turned to relate to a non-American listener, the generosity of the arrangements which that people had attempted to make for their aborigines.

Again it would be an eager *résumé* of the history of India or of the Moguls whose greatness never wearied him. Every now and then, throughout the summer, he would break out into descriptions of Delhi and Agra. Once he described the Taj as "a dimness, and again a dimness, and there—a grave!" Another time, he spoke of Shah Jehan, and then, with a burst of enthusiasm,—"Ah! *He* was the glory of his line! A feeling for, and discrimination of beauty that are unparalleled in history. And an artist himself! I have seen a manuscript illuminated by him, which is one of the art-treasures of India. What a genius!"

Oftener still, it was Akbar of whom he would tell, almost with tears in his voice, and a passion easier to understand, beside that undomed tomb, open to sun and wind, the grave of Secundra at Agra.

But all the more universal forms of human feeling were open to the Master. In one mood he talked of China as if she were the treasure-house of the world, and told us of the thrill with which he saw inscriptions in old Bengali (Kutil?) characters, over the doors of Chinese temples. Few things could be more eloquent of the vagueness of Western ideas regarding Oriental peoples than the fact that one of his listeners alleged untruthfulness as a notorious quality of that race. As a matter of fact the Chinese are famous in the United States, where they are known as business-men, for their remarkable commercial integrity, developed to a point far beyond that of the Western requirement of the written word. So the objection was an instance of misrepresentation, which, though disgraceful, is nevertheless too common. But in any case the Swami would have none of it. Untruthfulness! Social rigidity! What were these, except very, very relative terms? And as to untruthfulness in particular, could commercial life, or social life, or any other form of co-operation go on for a day, if men did not trust men? Untruthfulness as a necessity of etiquette? And how was that different from the Western idea? Is the Englishman always glad and always sorry at the proper place? But there is still a difference of degree? Perhaps—but only of degree!

Or he might wander as far afield as Italy, that "greatest of the countries of Europe, land of religion and of art; alike of imperial organization and of Mazzini;—mother of ideas, of culture, and of freedom!"

One day it was Shivaji and the Maharattas and the year's wandering as a Sannyasi, that won him home to Raigarh. "And to this day," said the Swami, "authority in India dreads the Sannyasi, lest he conceal beneath his yellow garb another Shivaji."

Often the enquiry, Who and what are the Aryans?—absorbed his attention ; and, holding that their origin was complex, he would tell us how in Switzerland he had felt himself to be in China, so like were the types. He believed too that the same was true of some parts of Norway. Then there were scraps of information about countries and physiognomies, an impassioned tale of the Hungarian scholar, who traced the Huns to Tibet, and lies buried in Darjeeling and so on.

It was very interesting throughout this summer, to watch,—not only in the Swami's case, but in that of all persons who might be regarded as representative of the old Indian culture,—how strong was the fascination exerted by enquiries of this nature. It seemed as if in the intellectual life of the East, questions of race and custom and ethnological origins and potentialities took the place that the observation of international politics might hold in the West. The idea suggested itself that Oriental scholars and statesmen could never ignore this element in their peculiar problems, and would be likely at the same time to bring a very valuable power of discrimination to bear upon it.

Sometimes the Swami would deal with the rift between Brahmins and Kshatriyas, painting the whole history of India as a struggle between the two, and showing that the latter had always embodied the rising, fetter-destroying impulses of the nation. He could give excellent reason too for the faith that was in him that the Kayasthas of modern Bengal represented the pre-Mauryan Kshatriyas. He would portray the two opposing types of culture, the one classical, intensive, and saturated with an ever-deepening sense of tradition and custom ; the other, defiant, impulsive, and liberal in its outlook. It was part of a deep-lying law of the historic development that Rama, Krishna, and Buddha had all arisen in the kingly, and not in the priestly caste. And in this paradoxical moment, Buddhism was reduced to a caste-smashing formula—"a religion invented by the Kshatriyas" as a crushing rejoinder to Brahminism!

That was a great hour indeed, when he spoke of Buddha, for, catching a word that seemed to identify him with its anti-Brahminical spirit, an uncomprehending listener said, "Why Swami, I did not know that you were a Buddhist!" "Madam," he said rounding on her, his whole face aglow with the inspiration of that name, "I am the servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha . . . Who was there ever like Him—the Lord—who never performed one action for Himself? With a heart that embraced the whole world . . . so full of pity that He—prince and monk —would give His life to save a little goat? So loving that He sacrificed himself to the hunger of a tigress? To the hospitality of a pariah? And blessed him? And He—came into my room when I was a boy—and I fell at His feet. For I knew it was the Lord Himself . . ."

Many times he spoke of Buddha in this fashion, sometimes at Belur and sometimes afterwards. And once he told us the story of Ambapali, the beautiful courtesan who feasted Him, in words that recalled the revolt of Rossetti's great half-sonnet of Mary Magdalene:

"Oh loose me! Seest thou not
my Bridegroom's face,
That draws me to Him? For His
feet my kiss,
My hair, my tears, He craves
to-day:—And oh!
What words can tell what other
day and place
Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet
of His?
He needs me, calls me, loves me, let me go!"

National feeling did not have it all its own way. For one morning when the chasm seemed to be widest, there was a long talk on Bhakti—that perfect identity with the Beloved that the devotion of Ray Ramananda, the Bengali nobleman before Chaitanya so beautifully illustrates—

"Four eyes met. There were changes in two souls.
And now I cannot remember whether he is a man
And I a woman, or he a woman and I a man!
All I know is, there were two, Love came, and
there is one!"

It was that same morning that he talked of the Babists of Persia,—in their era of martyrdom—of the woman who inspired and the man who worshipped and worked. And doubtless then he expatiated on that theory of his—somewhat quaint and surprising to unaccustomed minds, not so much for the matter of the statement, as for the explicitness of the expression, of the greatness and goodness of the young, who can love without seeking personal expression for their love, and their high potentiality.

Another day coming at sunrise when the snows could be seen, dawn-lighted, from the garden, it was Shiva and Uma on whom he dwelt,—and that was Shiva, up there, the white snow-peaks, and the light that fell upon Him was the Mother of the World. For a thought on which at this time he was dwelling much was that God *is* the Universe,—not within it, or outside it, and not the universe God or the image of God—but He it, the All.

Sometimes all through the summer he would sit for hours telling us stories, those cradle-tales of Hinduism, whose function is not at all that of our nursery fictions, but much more, like the man-making myths of the old Hellenic world. Best of all these I thought was the story of Shuka, and we looked on the Shiva-mountains and the bleak scenery of Almora the evening we heard it for the first time.

Shuka, the typical Paramahamsa, refused to be born for fifteen years, because he knew that his birth would mean his mother's death.* Then his father appealed to Uma,

* The reader may question this version of the story of Shuka. But the Sister Nivedita, as far as we can judge, has put the facts here thus, intentionally, either to make it appear more natural or to suggest the great love that Shuka had in his heart; for he (Shuka) knew he would leave

the Divine Mother. She was perpetually tearing down the veil of Maya before the hidden Saint, and Vyasa pleaded that She should cease this, or his son would never come to birth. Uma consented, for one moment only, and that moment the child was born. He came forth a young man sixteen years of age, unclothed, and went straight forward, knowing neither his father nor his mother, straight on, followed by Vyasa. Then, coming round a mountain-pass his body melted away from him, because it was no different from the universe, and his father following and crying, "Oh my son! Oh my son!" was answered only by the echo, "Om! Om! Om!"—among the rocks. Then Shuka resumed his body, and came to his father to get knowledge from him. But Vyasa found that he had none for him, and sent him to Janaka, king of Mithila, the father of Sita, if perchance he might have some to give. Three days he sat outside the royal gates, unheeded, without a change of expression or of look. The fourth day he was suddenly admitted to the king's presence with *éclat*. Still there was no change.

Then as a test, the powerful sage who was the king's prime minister, translated himself into a beautiful woman, so beautiful that every one present had to turn away from the sight of her, and none dared speak. But Shuka went up to her and drew her to sit beside him on his mat, while he talked to her of God.

Then the minister turned to Janaka saying, "Know, oh King, if you seek the greatest man on earth, this is he!"

"There is little more told of the life of Shuka. He is the ideal Paramahamsa. To him alone amongst men was it given to drink a handful of the waters of that one undivided Ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda—existence, knowledge and bliss absolute! Most saints die, having heard only the thunder of Its waves upon the shore. A few gain

father, mother, kindred, home and all for the love of God, as soon as he was born, causing death-like pangs to them, especially to his mother's heart. The reader should remember this also, while reading the last part of the story.

the vision—and still fewer, taste of It. But he drank of the Sea of Bliss!"

Shuka was indeed the Swami's saint. He was the type, to him, of that highest realisation to which life and the world are merely play. Long after, we learned how Sri Ramakrishna had spoken of him in his boyhood as, "My Shuka." And never can I forget the look, as of one gazing far into depths of joy, with which he once stood and quoted the words, "'I know, and Shuka knows, and *perhaps* Vyasa knows—a little,' says Shiva."

Another day in Almora the Swami talked of the great humanising lives that had arisen in Bengal, at the long inrolling wash of the first wave of modern consciousness on the ancient shores of Hindu culture. Of Ram Mohun Roy we had already heard from him at Naini Tal. And now of the Pundit Vidyasagar he exclaimed "There is not a man of my age in Northern India, on whom his shadow has not fallen!" It was a great joy to him to remember that these men and Sri Ramakrishna had all been born within a few miles of each other.

The Swami introduced Vidyasagar to us now as "the hero of widow re-marriage, and of the abolition of polygamy." But his favourite story about him was of that day when he went home from the Legislative Council, pondering over the question of whether or not to adopt English dress on such occasions. Suddenly some one came up to a fat Mogul who was proceeding homewards in leisurely and pompous fashion, in front of him, with the news "Sir, your house is on fire!" The Mogul went neither faster nor slower for this information, and presently the messenger contrived to express a discreet astonishment. Whereupon his master turned on him angrily, "Wretch!" he said, "am I to abandon the gait of my ancestors, because a few sticks happen to be burning?" And Vidyasagar, walking behind, determined to stick to the chudder, dhoti and sandals, not even adopting coat and slippers.

The picture of Vidyasagar going into retreat for a

month for the study of the Shastras, when his mother had suggested to him the re-marriage of child-widows, was very forcible. "He came out of his retirement of opinion that they were *not* against such re-marriage, and he obtained the signatures of the Pundits that they agreed in this opinion. Then the action of certain native princes led the Pundits to abandon their own signatures, so that, had the Government not determined to assist the movement, it could not have been carried—and now," added the Swami, "the difficulty has an economic rather than a social basis."

We could believe that a man who was able to discredit polygamy by moral force alone, was "intensely spiritual." And it was wonderful indeed to realise the Indian indifference to a formal creed, when we heard how this giant was driven by the famine of 1864,—when 140000 people died of hunger and disease,—to have nothing more to do with God, and become entirely agnostic in thought.

With this man, as one of the educators of Bengal, the Swami coupled the name of *David Hare,* the old Scotsman and atheist to whom the clergy of Calcutta refused Christian burial. He had died of nursing an old pupil through cholera. So his own boys carried his dead body and buried it in a swamp, and made the grave a place of pilgrimage. That place has now become College Square, the educational centre and his school is now within the University. And to this day, Calcutta students make pilgrimage to the tomb.

On this day we took advantage of the natural turn of the conversation to cross-question the Swami as to the possible influence that Christianity might have exerted over himself. He was much amused to hear that such a statement had been hazarded, and told us with much pride of his only contact with missionary influences, in the person of his old Scotch master, Mr. Hastie. This hot-headed old man lived on nothing, and regarded his room as his boys' home as much as his own. It was he who had first sent the Swami to Sri Ramakrishna, and towards the end of

his stay in India he used to say "Yes my boy, you were right, you were right! It is true that all is God!" "I am *proud* of him!" cried the Swami, "but I don't think you could say that he had Christianised me much!" It appeared, indeed, that he had only been his pupil for some six months, having attended college so irregularly that the Presidency College refused to send him up for his degree, though he undertook to pass!

We heard charming stories, too, on less serious subjects. There was the lodging-house in an American city for instance, where he had had to cook his own food, and where he would meet, in the course of operations, "an actress who ate roast turkey everyday, and a husband and wife who lived by making ghosts". And when the Swami remonstrated with the husband, and tried to persuade him to give up deceiving people, saying "You *ought* not to do this!" the wife would come up behind, and say eagerly "Yes Sir! that's just what I tell him ; for *he* makes all the ghosts, and Mrs. Williams takes all the money!"

He told us also of a young engineer, an educated man, who, at a spiritualistic gathering, "when the fat Mrs. Williams appeared from behind the screen as his thin mother, exclaimed 'Mother dear, how you *have* grown in the spirit-world!' "

"At this," said the Swami, "my heart broke, for I thought there could be no hope for the man." But, never at a loss, he told the story of a Russian painter, who was ordered to paint the picture of a peasant's dead father, the only description given being, "Man! don't I tell you he had a wart on his nose?" When at last, therefore, the painter had made a portrait of some stray peasant, and affixed a large wart to the nose, the picture was declared to be ready, and the son was told to come and see it. He stood in front of it, greatly overcome, and said "Father! Father! how changed you are since I saw you last!" After this, the young engineer would never speak to the Swami again, which showed at least that he could see the point

of a story. But at this, the Hindu monk was genuinely astonished.

In spite of such general interests, however, the inner strife grew high, and the thought pressed on the mind of one of the older members of our party that the Master himself needed service and peace. Many times he spoke with wonder of the torture of life, and who can say how many signs there were, of bitter need? A word or two was spoken—little, but enough—and he, after many hours, came back and told us that he longed for quiet, and would go alone to the forests and find soothing.

And then, looking up, he saw the young moon shining above us, and he said "The Mohammedans think much of the new moon. Let us also, with the new moon, begin a new life!" And he blessed his daughter with a great blessing, so that she, thinking that her old relationship was broken, nor dreaming that a new and deeper life was being given to it, knew only that the hour was strange and passing sweet.

And so that strife was ended, and for all views and opinions of the Swami, there was room made thenceforth, that they might be held and examined, and determined on at leisure, however impossible or unpleasing they might seem at the first.

May, 25.

He went. It was Wednesday. And on Saturday he came back. He had been in the silence of the forests ten hours each day, but on returning to his tent in the evenings, he had been surrounded with so much eager attendance as to break the mood, and he had fled. Yet, he was radiant. He had discovered in himself the old-time Sannyasi, able to go barefoot, and endure heat, cold, and scanty fare, unspoilt by the West. This, and what else he had got, was enough for the present, and we left him, under the eucalyptus trees, and amongst the tea-roses, in Mr. Sevier's garden, full of gratitude and peace.

May, 30.

The following Monday he went away, with his host and hostess, on a week's visit, and we were left in Almora to read, and draw, and botanise.

June, 2.

One evening in that week, we sat talking after dinner. Our thoughts were curiously with the 'In Memoriam', and one of us read aloud—

> "Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
> One set slow bell will seem to toll
> The passing of the sweetest soul
> That ever looked with human eyes.
> I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
> Eternal greetings to the dead;
> And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
> 'Adieu, Adieu,' for evermore."

It was the very hour at which, in the distant south, one soul of our own circle was passing out of this little church visible of ours, into some finer radiance and more triumphant manifestation, perhaps, in the closer presence possible beyond. But we did not know it yet. Still another day the dark shadow of, we knew not what hung over us. And then, as we sat working on Friday morning, the telegram came, a day late, that said—"Goodwin died last night at Ootacamund." Our poor friend had, it appeared, been one of the first victims of what was to prove an epidemic of typhoid fever. And it seemed that with his last breath he had spoken of the Swami, and longed for his presence by his side.

June, 5.

On Sunday evening, the Swami came home. Through our gate and over the terrace his way brought him, and there we sat and talked with him a moment. He did not know our news, but a great darkness hung over him already, and presently he broke the silence to remind us

of that saint who had called the cobra's bite "a messenger from the Beloved," one whom he had loved, second only to Sri Ramakrishna himself. "I have just," he said, "received a letter that says: 'Pavhari Baba has completed all his sacrifices with the sacrifice of his own body. He has burnt himself in his sacrificial fire.'" "Swami!" exclaimed someone from amongst his listeners, "wasn't that very wrong?"

"How can I tell?" said the Swami, speaking in great agitation. "He was too great a man for me to judge. He knew himself what he was doing."

Very little was said after this, and the party of monks passed on. Not yet had the other news been broken.

June, 6.

Next morning he came early, in a great mood. He had been up, he said afterwards, since four. And one went out to meet him, and told him of Mr. Goodwin's death. The blow fell quietly. Some days later, he refused to stay in the place where he had received it, and complained of the weakness that brought the image of his most faithful disciple constantly into his mind. It was no more manly, he protested, to be thus ridden by one's memory, than to retain the characteristics of the fish or the dog. Man must conquer this illusion, and know that the dead are here beside us and with us, as much as ever. It is their absence and separation that are a myth. And then he would break out again with some bitter utterance against the folly of imagining a Personal Will to guide the universe. "As if," he exclaimed, "it would not be one's right and duty to fight such a God and slay Him, for killing Goodwin!—And Goodwin, if he had lived, could have done so much!" And in India one was free to recognise this as the most religious, because the most unflinchingly truthful mood of all!

And while I speak of this utterance, I may perhaps put beside it another, that I heard a year later, spoken out

of the same fierce wonder at the dreams with which we comfort ourselves. "Why!" he said, then, "Every petty magistrate and officer is allowed his period of retirement and rest. Only God, The Eternal Magistrate, must sit judging for ever, and never go free!"

But in these first hours, the Swami was calm about his loss, and sat down and chatted quietly with us. He was full that morning of Bhakti passing into asceticism, the divine passion that carries the soul on its high tides, far out of reach of persons, yet leaves it again, struggling to avoid those sweet snares of personality.

What he said that morning of renunciation proved a hard gospel to one of those who listened, and when he came again she put it to him as her conviction that to love without attachment involved no pain, and was in itself ideal.

He turned on her with a sudden solemnity. "What is this idea of Bhakti without renunciation?" he said. "It is most pernicious!" and standing there for an hour or more, he talked of the awful self-discipline that one must impose on oneself, if one would indeed be unattached, of the requisite nakedness of selfish motives, and of the danger that at any moment the most flower-like soul might have its petals soiled with the grosser stains of life. He told the story of an Indian nun who was asked when a man could be certain of safety on this road, and who sent back, for answer, a little plate of ashes. For the fight against passion was long and fierce, and at any moment the conqueror might become the conquered.

And as he talked, it seemed that this banner of renunciation was the flag of a great victory, that poverty and self-mastery were the only fit raiment for the soul that would wed the Eternal Bridegroom, and that life was a long opportunity for giving, and the thing not taken away from us was to be mourned as lost. Weeks afterwards, in Kashmir, when he was again talking in some kindred fashion, one of us ventured to ask him if the feeling he

thus roused were not that worship of pain that Europe abhors as morbid.

"Is the worship of pleasure, then, so noble?" was his immediate answer. "But indeed," he added, after a pause, "we worship neither pain nor pleasure. We seek through either to come at that which transcends them both."

June, 9.

This Thursday morning there was a talk on Krishna. It was characteristic of the Swami's mind, and characteristic also of the Hindu culture from which he had sprung, that he could lend himself to the enjoyment and portrayal of an idea one day, that the next would see submitted to a pitiless analysis and left slain upon the field. He was a sharer to the full in the belief of his people that, provided an idea was spiritually true and consistent, it mattered very little about its objective actuality. And this mode of thought had first been suggested to him, in his boyhood, by his own Master. He had mentioned some doubt as to the authenticity of a certain religious history. "What!" said Sri Ramakrishna, "do you not then think that those who could conceive such ideas must have been the thing itself?"

The existence of Krishna, then, like that of Christ, he often told us 'in a general way' he doubted. Buddha and Mohammed alone, amongst religious teachers, had been fortunate enough to have 'enemies as well as friends', so that their historical careers were beyond dispute. As for Krishna, he was the most shadowy of all. A poet, a cowherd, a great ruler, a warrior, and a sage had all perhaps been merged in one beautiful figure, holding the Gita in his hand.

But today, Krishna was "the most perfect of the Avatars." And a wonderful picture followed, of the charioteer who reined in his horses, while he surveyed the field of battle and in one brief glance noted the disposition of the forces, at the same moment that he commenced to

utter to his royal pupil the deep spiritual truths of the Gita.

And indeed as we went through the countrysides of northern India this summer, we had many chances of noting how deep this Krishna-myth had set its mark upon the people. The songs that dancers chanted as they danced, in the roadside hamlets, were all of Radha and Krishna. And the Swami was fond of a statement, as to which we, of course, could have no opinion, that the Krishna-worshippers of India had exhausted the possibilities of the romantic motive in lyric poetry.

Is that curious old story of the Gopis, then, really a fragment of some pastoral worship, absorbed by a more modern system, and persistently living on, in all its dramatic tenderness and mirth, into the glare of the nineteenth century?

But throughout these days, the Swami was fretting to be away and alone. The place where he had heard of Mr. Goodwin's loss was intolerable to him, and letters to be written and received constantly renewed the wound. He said one day that Sri Ramakrishna, while seeming to be all Bhakti was really, within, all Jnana; but he himself, apparently all Jnana, was full of Bhakti, and that thereby he was apt to be as weak as any woman.

One day he carried off a few faulty lines of some one's writing, and brought back a little poem, which was sent to the widowed mother, as his memorial of her son.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.*

Speed forth, O Soul! upon thy star-strewn path,
Speed, blissful one! where thought is ever free,
Where time and sense no longer mist the view,
Eternal peace and blessings be on thee!

* *The text of the poem as given above differs a little from the poem as first published in the* Prabuddha Bharata, August, 1898, *when Swami Vivekananda was living.*

Thy service true, complete thy sacrifice,
Thy home the heart of love transcendent find,
Remembrance sweet, that tells all space and time,
Like altar-rose, fill thy place behind.

Thy bonds are broke, thy quest in bliss is found.
And—one with that which comes as Death and Life,—
Thou helpful one! unselfish e'er on earth,
Ahead, still aid with love this world of strife.

And then, because there was nothing left of the original, and he feared that she who was corrected (because *her* lines had been "in three metres") might be hurt, he expatiated, long and earnestly upon the theme that it was so much greater to feel poetically than merely to string syllable together in rhyme and metre!* He might be very severe on a sympathy or an opinion that seemed in his eyes sentimental or false. But an effort that failed found always in the Master its warmest advocate and tenderest defence.

And how happy was that acknowledgment of the bereaved mother to him, when, in the midst of her sorrow she wrote and thanked him for the character of his influence over the son who had died so far away!

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* *In the original Manuscript of the book there is a note added by Nivedita which reads*:—

In obedience to the beloved wish of S. Sara I give here, the original lines:—

Speed forth, lonely Soul, upon thy start-strewn path,—
Spread, lonely soul, upon thy meditative way,—
Freed from the mists of time and sense—
Ascend!

Service complete and sacrifice accepted, from
Thy home in the deep heart of Love Transcendent find
Incense and flowers and music fill thy place behind thee,
Rest, weary soul!

Severed all bonds that held thee, ended thy quest—
Then lost in the ocean—one with the Life Immortal.
Peace, happy soul!

"It has three metres"—said the Master. Again, he said, "the line that really strikes the poetic note is that—'Thy home in the deep Heart of Love Transcendent find.'"

June, 10.

It was our last afternoon at Almora that we heard the story of the fatal illness of Sri Ramakrishna. Dr. Mohendra Lall Sirkar had been called in, and had pronounced the disease to be cancer of the throat, leaving the young disciples with many warnings as to its infectious nature. Half an hour later, "Noren", as he then was, came in and found them huddled together, discussing the dangers of the case. He listened to what they had been told, and then, looking down, saw at his feet the cup of gruel that had been partly taken by Sri Ramakrishna and which must have contained in it, the germs of the fatal discharges of mucus and *pus,* as it came out in his baffled attempts to swallow the thing, on account of the stricture of the food-passage in the throat. He picked it up, and drank from it, before them all. Never was the infection of cancer mentioned amongst the disciples again.

Chapter IV

ON THE WAY TO KATHGODAM

June, 11.

On Saturday morning we left Almora. It took us two days and a half to reach Kathgodam. How beautiful the journey was! Dim, almost tropical, forests, troops of monkeys, and the ever-wondrous Indian night.

Somewhere *en route* near a curious old water-mill and deserted forge, the Swami told *Dhira Mata* of a legend that spoke of this hillside as haunted by a race of centaur-like phantoms, and of an experience known to him, by which one had first seen forms there, and only afterwards heard the folk-tale.

The roses were gone by this time, but a flower was in bloom that crumbled at a touch, and he pointed this out, because of its wealth of associations in Indian poetry.

June, 12.

On Sunday afternoon we rested, near the Plains, in what we took to be an out-of-the-way hotel, above a lake and fall, and there he translated for us the Rudra-prayer.

"From the Unreal lead us to the Real.
From darkness lead us unto light.
From death lead us to immortality.
Reach us through and through our self.
And evermore protect us—Oh Thou Terrible!—
From ignorance, by Thy sweet
compassionate Face."

He hesitated a long time over the fourth line, thinking of rendering it, "Embrace us in the heart of our heart". But at last he put his perplexity to us, saying shyly, "The real meaning is 'Reach us through and through ourself.'"

He had evidently feared that this sentence, with its extraordinary intensity, might not make good sense in English. But our unhesitating choice of that afternoon has received a deep confirmation in my own eyes, since I have understood that a more literal rendering would be, "O Thou who art manifest only unto Thyself, manifest Thyself also unto us!" I now regard his translation as a rapid and direct transcript of the experience of Samadhi itself. It tears the living heart out of the Sanskrit, as it were, and renders it again in an English form.

It was indeed an afternoon of translations, and he gave us fragments of the great benediction after mourning, which is one of the most beautiful of the Hindu sacraments;

"The blissful winds are sweet to us.
The seas are showering bliss on us.
May the corn in our fields bring bliss to us.
May the plants and herbs bring bliss to us.
May the cattle give us bliss.
O Father in Heaven be Thou blissful unto us!
The very dust of the earth is full of bliss.
(And then, the voice dying down into meditation),—
It is all bliss—all bliss—all bliss."

And again we had Surdas' Song of the Nautch-girl:*

O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness.
Make of us both the same Brahman!

One drop of water is in the sacred Jumna,
And another is foul in the ditch by the roadside,
But, when they fall into the Ganges,
both alike become holy.
So Lord, look not upon my evil qualities,
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,
Make of us both the same Brahman!

** The Song was heard by Swami Vivekananda from the Nautch-girl at Khetri.*

One piece of iron is the image in the temple,
And another is the knife in the hand of the butcher,
But when they touch the philosopher's
stone, both alike turn to gold.
So Lord, look not upon my evil qualities,
Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness.
Make of us both the same Brahman!

Was it that same day, or some other, that he told us of the old Sannyasin in Benares, who saw him annoyed by troops of monkeys, and, afraid that he might turn and run, shouted, "Always face the brute!"?

Those journeys were delightful. We were always sorry to reach a destination. At this time, it took us a whole afternoon to cross the Terai by rail,—that strip of malarial country, on which, as he reminded us, Buddha had been born. As we had come down the mountain-roads, we had met parties of country-folk, fleeing to the upper hills, with their families and all their goods, to escape the fever which would be upon them with the rains. And now, in the train, there was the gradual change of vegetation to watch, and the Master's pleasure, greater than that of any proprietor, in showing us the wild peacocks, or here and there an elephant, or a train of camels.

Quickly enough, we came back to the palm-zone. Already we had reached the yuccas and cactus the day before, and deodar-cedars we should not see again, till distant Acchabal.

Chapter V

ON THE WAY TO BARAMULLA

Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda ; Gurubhais, and disciples.
A party of Europeans, amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the 'Steady Mother' ; 'One whose name was Jaya' ; and Nivedita.
Place :— From Bareilly to Baramulla, Kashmir.
Time :— June 14th to 20th, 1898.

June, 14.

We entered the Punjab next day, and great was the Swami's excitement at the fact. It almost seemed as if he had been born there, so close and special was his love for this province. He talked of the girls at their spinning-wheels, listening to the "Sohum! Sohum! I am He! I am He!" Then, by a swift transition he turned to the far past, and unrolled for us the great historic panorama of the advance of the Greeks on the Indus, the rise of Chandragupta, and the development of the Buddhistic empire. He was determined this summer to find his way to Attock, and see with his own eyes the spot at which Alexander was turned back. He described to us the Gandhara sculptures, which he must have seen in the Lahore Museum the year before, and lost himself in indignant repudiation of the absurd European claim that India had ever sat at the feet of Greece in things artistic.

Then there were flying glimpses of long expected cities,—Ludhiana, where certain trusty English disciples had lived as children ; Lahore, where his Indian lectures had ended ; and so on. We came, too, upon the dry gravel beds of many rivers and learnt that the space between one pair was called the Doab and the area containing them all, the Punjab. It was at twilight, crossing one of these stony tracts, that he told us of that great vision which came to

him years ago, while he was still new to the ways of the life of a monk, giving back to him, as he always afterwards believed, the ancient mode of Sanskrit chanting.

"It was evening," he said, "in that age when the Aryans had only reached the Indus. I saw an old man seated on the bank of the great river. Wave upon wave of darkness was rolling in upon him, and he was chanting from the Rig Veda. Then I awoke, and went on chanting. They were the tones that we used long ago."

Many months later, one of those who listened, heard the story of this vision once more from the Swami; and it seemed to her then, with her gathered insight into his method of thought, that it had been an experience of immense subjective importance. Perhaps it was a token to him of a transcendent continuity in the spiritual experience, forbidding it to be baffled even by the lapse of millenniums and the breaking of many life-threads. If so, one could not expect him to be explicit on the point. Those who were constantly preoccupied with imagination regarding their own past, always aroused his contempt. But on this second occasion of telling the story, he gave a glimpse of it, from a very different point of view.

"Shankaracharya," he was saying, "had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence. Indeed I always imagine," he went on suddenly, with dreamy voice and far-away look, "I always imagine that he had some vision such as mine when he was young, and recovered the ancient music that way. Anyway, his whole life's work is nothing but that, the throbbing of the beauty of the Vedas and Upanishads."

Speeches like this were of course purely speculative, and he himself could never bear to be reminded of the theories to which he thus in moments of emotion and impulse, gave chance birth. To others, however, they would often seem not valueless.

"Vivekananda is nothing," exclaimed one of his admirers in the distant West, "if not a breaker of bondage!"—

and a trifling incident of this day's journey recalls the words. At a station entering the Punjab, he called to him a Mohammedan vendor of food, and bought from his hand, and ate.

From Rawalpindi to Murree, we went by tonga, and there we spent some days before setting out for Kashmir. Here the Swami came to the conclusion that any effort which he might make to induce the orthodox to accept a European as a fellow-disciple, or in the direction of woman's education, had better be made in Bengal. The distrust of the foreigner was too strong in Punjab, to admit of work succeeding there. He was much occupied by this question, from time to time, and would sometimes remark on the paradox presented by the Bengali combination of political antagonism to the English, and readiness to love and trust.

We had reached Murree on Wednesday afternoon, June the 15th. It was again Saturday, June the 18th, when we set out for Kashmir.

June, 18.

One of our party was ill, and that first day we went but a short distance, and stopped at Dulai, the first dak bungalow across the border. It was a curious moment, leaving British India behind, with the crossing of a dusty, sunbaked bridge. We were soon to have a vivid realisation of just how much and just how little this demarcation meant.

We were now in the valley of the Jhelum. Our whole journey, from Kohala to Baramulla, was to run through a narrow, twisting, mountain-pass, the rapidly-rising ravine of this river. Here, at Dulai, the speed of the current was terrific, and huge water-smoothed pebbles formed a great shingle.

Most of the afternoon, we were compelled by a storm to spend indoors, and a new chapter was opened at Dulai, in our knowledge of Hinduism, for the Swami told us, gravely and frankly, of its modern abuses, and spoke of his

own uncompromising hostility to those evil practices which pass under the name of Vamachara.

When we asked how Sri Ramakrishna,—who never could bear to condemn the hope of any man,—had looked at these things, he told us that 'the old man' had said "Well, well! but every house may have a scavengers' entrance!" And he pointed out that all sects of *diabolism,* in any country, belonged to this class. It was a terrible but necessary revelation, that never required to be repeated, and it has been related here, in its true place, in order that none may be able to say that he deceived those who trusted him, as to the worst things that might be urged against any of his people or their creeds.

June, 19.

We took it in turns to drive with the Swami in his tonga, and this next day seemed full of reminiscence.

He talked of Brahmavidya, the vision of the One, the Alone-Real, and told how love was the only cure for evil. He had had a school-fellow, who grew up and became rich, but lost his health. It was an obscure disease, sapping his energy and vitality daily, yet altogether baffling the skill of the doctors. At last, because he knew that the Swami had always been religious, and men turn to religion when all else fails, he sent to beg him to come to him. When the Master reached him, a curious thing happened. There came to his mind a text—"Him the Brahmin conquers, who thinks that he is separate from the Brahmin. Him the Kshatriya conquers, who thinks that he is separate from the Kshatriya. And him the Universe conquers who thinks that he is separate from the Universe." And the sick man grasped this, and recovered. "And so," said the Swami, "though I often say strange things and angry things, yet remember that in my heart I never seriously mean to preach anything but love! All these things will come right, only when we realise that we love each other."

Was it then, or the day, before, that, talking of the Great God, he told us how when he was a child, his mother would sigh over his naughtiness, and say "so many prayers and austerities, and instead of a good soul, Shiva has sent me you!" till he was hypnotised into a belief that he was really one of Shiva's demons. He thought that for a punishment, he had been banished for a while from Shiva's heaven, and that his one effort in life must be to go back there. His first act of sacrilege, he told us once, had been committed at the age of five, when he embarked on a stormy argument with his mother, to the effect that when his right hand was soiled with eating, it would be cleaner to lift his tumbler of water with the left. For this or similar perversities, her most drastic remedy was to put him under the water-tap, and while cold water was pouring over his head, to say "Shiva! Shiva!" This, he said, never failed of its effect. The prayer would remind him of his exile, and he would say to himself "No, no, not this time again!" and so return to quiet and obedience.

He had a surpassing love for Mahadeva, and once he said of the Indian women of the future that if, amidst their new tasks they would only remember now and then to say "Shiva! Shiva!" it would be worship enough. The very air of the Himalayas was charged, for him, with the image of that "eternal meditation" that no thought of pleasure could break. And he understood, he said, for the first time this summer, the meaning of the nature-story that made the Ganges fall on the head of the Great God, and wander in and out amongst His matted locks, before she found an outlet on the plains below. He had searched long, he said, for the words that the rivers and waterfalls uttered, amongst the mountains, before he had realised that it was the eternal cry "Bom! Bom! Hara! Hara!" "Yes!" he said of Shiva one day, "He is the Great God, calm, beautiful, and silent! and I am His great worshipper."

Again his subject was marriage, as the type of the soul's relation to God. "This is why," he exclaimed, "though

the love of a mother is in some ways greater, yet the whole world takes the love of man and woman as the type. *No other has such tremendous idealising power.* The beloved actually becomes what he is imagined to be. This love transforms its object."

Then the talks strayed to national types, and he spoke of the joy with which the returning traveller greets once more the sight of the men and women of his own country. The whole of life has been a sub-conscious education to enable one to understand in these every faintest ripple of expression in face and form.

And again we passed a group of Sannyasins going on foot, and he broke out into fierce invective against asceticism as "savagery." It is a peculiarity of India that only the religious life is perfectly conscious and fully developed. In other lands, a man will undergo as many hardships, in order to win success in business, or enterprise, or even in sport, as these men were probably enduring. But the sight of wayfarers doing slow miles on foot in the name of their ideals, seemed to rouse in his mind a train of painful associations, and he grew impatient on behalf of humanity, at "the torture of religion." Then again the mood passed, as suddenly as it had arisen, and gave place to the equally strong statement of the conviction that were it not for this "savagery," luxury would have robbed man of all his manliness.

We stopped that evening at Uri dak bungalow, and in the twilight, we all walked in the meadows and the bazaar. How beautiful the place was! A little mud fortress—exactly of the European feudal pattern—overhung the footway as it swept into a great open theatre of field and hill. Along the road, above the river, lay the bazaar, and we returned to the bungalow by a path across the fields, past cottages in whose gardens the roses were in bloom. As we came, too, it would happen that here and there, some child, more venturesome than others, would play with us.

June, 20.

The next day, driving through the most beautiful part of the Pass, and seeing cathedral rocks and an old ruined temple of the Sun, we reached Baramulla. The legend is that the Vale of Kashmir was once a lake, and that at this point the Divine Boar pierced the mountains with his tusks, and let the Jhelum go free. Another piece of geography in the form of myth. Or is it also prehistoric history?

Chapter VI

THE VALE OF KASHMIR

Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda and a party of Europeans, amongst whom were Dhira Mata—the 'Steady Mother,' 'One whose name was Jaya,' and Nivedita.
Time :— June 20th.
Place :— The River Jhelum—Baramulla to Srinagar.

"It is said that the Lord Himself is the weight on the side of the fortunate!" cried the Swami in high glee, returning to our room at the dak bungalow, and sitting down, with his umbrella on his knees. As he had brought no companion, he had himself to perform all the ordinary little masculine offices, and he had gone out to hire Dungas, and do what was necessary. But he had immediately fallen in with a man, who, on hearing his name, had undertaken the whole business, and sent him back, free of responsibility.

So we enjoyed the day. We drank Kashmiri tea out of a Samovar and ate the jam of the country, and at about four o'clock we entered into possession of a flotilla of Dungas, three in number, on which presently we set forth for Srinagar. The first evening, however we were moored by the garden of the Swami's friend, and there we played with the children, and gathered forget-me-nots, and watched a circle of peasants, singing, at some harvest-game in the freshly-cut cornfields. The Swami, returning to his boat about eleven, could still as he passed us in the dark, hear the end of our warm discussion about the effect of the introduction of money on rural peoples.

We found ourselves, next day, in the midst of a beautiful valley, ringed round with snow-mountains. This is known as the Vale of Kashmir, but it might be more accurately described, perhaps, as the Vale of Srinagar. The city

of Islamabad had its own valley, higher up the river, and to reach it we had to wind in and out amongst the mountains. They sky above was of the bluest of the blue, and the water-road along which we travelled, was also, perforce, blue. Sometimes our way lay through great green tangles of lotus-leaves, with a rosy flower or two, and on each side stretched the fields, in some of which, as we came, they were reaping. The whole was a symphony in blue and green and white, so exquisitely pure and vivid that for a while the response of the soul to its beauty was almost pain!

That first morning, taking a long walk across the fields, we came upon an immense chennaar tree, standing in the midst of a wide pasture. It really looked as if the passage through it might shelter the proverbial twenty cows! The Swami fell to architectural visions of how it might be fitted up as a dwelling-place for a hermit. A small cottage might in fact have been built in the hollow of this living tree. And then he talked of meditation, in a way to consecrate every chennaar we should ever see.

We turned, with him, into the neighbouring farm-yard. There we found, seated under a tree, a singularly handsome elderly woman. She wore the crimson coronet and white veil of the Kashmiri wife, and sat spinning wool, while round her, helping her, were her two daughters-in-law and their children. The Swami had called at this farm once before, in the previous autumn, and often spoken, since, of the faith and pride of this very woman. He had begged for water, which she had at once given him. Then, before going, he had asked her quietly, "And what, Mother, is your religion?" "I thank God, Sir!" had rung out the old voice, in pride and triumph, "by the mercy of the Lord, I am a Mussalman!" The whole family received him now, as an old friend, and were ready to show every courtesy to the friends he had brought. The journey to Srinagar took two to three days, and one evening, as we walked in the fields before supper, one who had seen the Kalighat, complained to the Master of the abandonment of feeling there,

which had jarred on her *"Why* do they kiss the ground before the Image?" she exclaimed. The Swami had been pointing to the crop of Til,—which he thought to have been the original of the English dill,—and calling it "the oldest oil-bearing seed of the Aryans." But at this question, he dropped the little blue flower from his hands, and a great hush came over his voice, as he stood still and said, "Is it not the same thing to kiss the ground before that Image, as to kiss the ground before these mountains?"

Our Master had promised that before the end of the summer he would take us into retreat, and teach us to meditate. We had now to go to Srinagar for a long-accumulating mail, and the question rose as to the arrangement of the holiday. It was decided that we should first see the country, and afterwards make the retreat.

The first evening in Srinagar we dined out, with some Bengalee officials, and in the course of conversation, one of the Western guests maintained that the history of every nation illustrated and evolved certain ideals, to which the people of that nation should hold themselves true. It was very curious to see how the Hindus present objected to this. To them it was clearly a bondage, to which the mind of man could not permanently submit itself. Indeed, in their revolt against the fetters of the doctrine, they appeared to be unable to do justice to the idea itself. At last the Swami intervened. "I think you must admit," he said, "that the ultimate unit is psychological. This is much more permanent than the geographical." And then he spoke of cases known to us all, of one of whom he always thought as the most typical "Christian" he had ever seen, yet she was a Bengali woman, and of another, born in the West, who was 'a better Hindu than himself.' And was not this, after all, the ideal state of things, that each should be born in the other's country to spread the given ideal as far as it could be carried?

Chapter VII

LIFE AT SRINAGAR

Time:—June 22nd to July 15th, 1898.
Place:—Srinagar.

In the mornings, we still had long talks, as before—sometimes it would be the different religious periods through which Kashmir had passed, or the morality of Buddhism, or the history of Shiva-worship, or perhaps the position of Srinagar under Kanishka.

Once he was talking with one of us about Buddhism, and he suddenly said, "the fact is, Buddhism tried to do, in the time of Ashoka, what the world never was ready for till now!" He referred to the federalisation of religions. It was a wonderful picture, this, of the religious imperialism of Ashoka, broken down, time and again, by successive waves of Christianity and Mohammedanism, each claiming exclusive rights over the conscience of mankind, and finally to seem a possibility, within measuarble distance of time, today!

Another time, the talk was of Genghis (or Chenghiz) Khan, the conqueror from Central Asia. "You hear people talk of him as a vulgar aggressor," he cried passionately, "but that is not true! They are never greedy or vulgar, these great souls! He was inspired with the thought of unity, and he wanted to unify his world. Yes, Napoleon was cast in the same mould. And another, Alexander. Only those three, or perhaps one soul, manifesting itself in three different conquests!" And then he passed on to speak of that one soul whom he believed to have come again and again in religion, charged with the divine impulse to bring about the unity of man in God.

At this time, the transfer of the Prabuddha Bharata, from Madras to the newly established Ashrama at Mayavati

was much in all our thoughts. The Swami had always had a special love for this paper, as the beautiful name he had given it indicated. He had always been eager, too, for the establishment of organs of his own. The value of the journal, in the education of Modern India, was perfectly evident to him, and he felt that his Master's message and mode of thought required to be spread by this means, as well as by preaching and by work. Day after day, therefore, he would dream about the future of his papers, as about the work in its various centres. Day after day he would talk of the forthcoming first number, under the new editorship of Swami Swarupananda. And one afternoon he brought to us, as we sat together, a paper on which, he had "tried to write a letter, but it *would* come this way!"—

TO THE AWAKENED INDIA*

Once more awake!
For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!
No death for thee!

Resume thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful pose, even of the road-side dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever
Forward! Speak thy rousing words.

Thy home is gone,
Where loving hearts had brought thee up, and
Watched thy growth. But Fate is strong,
And this the law,—all things come back to the source
They sprang their strength to renew.

* *The text of the poem as given above differs a little from the poem as first published in the* Prabuddha Bharata, August, 1898, *when Swami Vivekananda was living.*

Then start afresh
From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
For working wonders new. The heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song;
Deodar shades give thee ne'er-dying peace.

And all above,
Himala's daughter Uma, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, Who works all works, and
Makes of One the world: whose mercy
Opes the gate to Truth, and shows
The One in All, give thee unending
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,
The seers great whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
Well. Their servant, thou hast got
Their secret,—'tis but One.

Then speak, O Love!—
Before thy gentle voice so sweet, behold how
Visions melt, and fold after fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth, bare Truth,
In all its glory shines.—

And tell the world—
Awake, arise, dream no more!
This is the land of dreams, where Karma
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
Of flowers sweet or noxious,—and none
Has root or stem, being born in nothing, which

The softest breath of Truth drives back to
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,
Or, if you cannot, dream then truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

June, 26.

The Master was longing to leave us all, and go away into some place of quiet, alone. But we not knowing this, insisted on accompanying him to the Coloured Springs, called "Kshir Bhowani," or Milk of the Mother. It was said to be the first time that Christian or Mohammedan had ever landed there, and we can never be thankful enough for the glimpse we had of it, since afterwards it was to become the most sacred of all names to us. An amusing incident was that our Mussalman boatmen would not allow us to land with shoes on ; so thoroughly Hinduistic is the Mohammedanism of Kashmir, with its forty Rishis, and pilgrimages made fasting, to their shrines.

June, 29.

Another day we went off quietly by ourselves, and visited the Takt-i-Suleiman, a little temple very massively built, on the summit of a small mountain two or three thousand feet high. It was peaceful and beautiful, and the famous Floating Gardens could be seen below us, for miles around. The Takt-i-Suleiman was one of the great illustrations of the Swami's argument, when he would take up the subject of the Hindu love of nature as shown in the choice of sites for temples and architectural monuments. As he had declared, in London, that 'the saints lived on the hill-tops, in order to enjoy the scenery', so now he pointed out,—citing one example after another,—that our Indian people always consecrated places of peculiar beauty and importance, by making there their altars of worship. And there was no denying that the little Takt, crowning

the hill that dominated the whole valley, was a case in point.

Many lovely fragments of those days come into mind, as—

> "Therefore, Tulsi, take thou care to live with all, for who can tell where, or in what garb, the Lord Himself may next come to thee?"
> "One God is hidden in all these, the Torturer of all, the Awakener of all, the Reservoir of all being, He Who is bereft of all qualities."
> "There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars."

There was the story of how Ravana was advised to take the form of Rama, in order to cheat Sita. He answered, "Have I not thought of it? But in order to take a man's form, you must meditate on him; and Rama is the Lord Himself; so, when I meditate on him, even the position of Brahma becomes a mere straw. How, then, could I think of a woman?"

"And so," commented the Swami, "even in the commonest or most criminal life, there are these glimpses." It was ever thus. He was constantly interpreting human life as the expression of God, never insisting on the heinousness or wickedness of an act or a character.

"In that which is dark night to the rest of the world, there the man of self-control is awake. That which is life to the rest of the world is sleep to him."

Speaking of Thomas á Kempis one day, and of how he himself used to wander as a Sannyasin, with the Gita and the Imitation as his whole library, one word, he said, came back to him, inseparably associated with the name of the Western monk.

> "Silence! ye teachers of the world, and silence! ye prophets! Speak thou alone, O Lord, unto my soul!"

Again—

"The soft Shirisha flower can bear the weight of
humming bees, but not of birds—
So, Uma, don't you go and make Tapasya!
Come, Uma, come! delight and idol of my soul!
Be seated, Mother, on the lotus of my heart,
And let me take a long long look at you.
From my birth up, I am gazing,
Mother, at your face—
Know you suffering what trouble,
and pain?
Be seated, therefore, Blessed One
on the lotus of my heart,
And dwell there for evermore."

Every now and then there would be long talks about the Gita, "that wonderful poem, without one note in it, of weakness or unmanliness." He said one day that it was absurd to complain that knowledge was not given to women or to shudras. For the whole gist of the Upanishads was contained in the Gita. Without it, indeed, they could hardly be understood; and women and all castes could read the Mahabharata.

July, 4.

With great fun and secrecy the Swami and his one non-American disciple prepared to celebrate The Fourth of July. A regret had been expressed in his hearing, that we had no American Flag, with which to welcome the other members of the party to breakfast, on their National Festival; and late on the afternoon of the third, he brought a Pundit Durzey in great excitement, explaining that this man would be glad to imitate it, if he were told how. The stars and stripes were very crudely represented, I fear, on the piece of cotton that was nailed, with branches of ever-

greens, to the head of the dining-room-boat, when the Americans stepped on board for early tea, on Independence Day! But the Swami had postponed a journey, in order to be present at the little festival, and he himself contributed a poem to the addresses that were now read aloud, by way of greeting.

TO THE FOURTH OF JULY

Behold, the dark clouds melt away,
That gathered thick at night, and hung
So like a gloomy pall, above the earth!
Before thy magic touch, the world
Awakes. The birds in chorus sing.
The flowers raise their star-like crowns,
Dew-set, and wave thee welcome fair.

The lakes are opening wide in love,
Their hundred thousand lotus-eyes,
To welcome thee, with all their depth.
All hail to thee, Thou Lord of Light!
A welcome new to thee, to-day,
Oh Sun! To-day thou sheddest *Liberty*!

Bethink thee how the world did wait,
And search for thee, through time and clime.
Some gave up home and love of friends,
And went in quest of thee, self-banished,
Through dreary oceans, through primeval forests,
Each step a struggle for their life or death;
Then came the day when work bore fruit,
And worship, love and sacrifice,
Fulfilled, accepted, and complete.
Then thou, propitious, rose to shed
The light of *Freedom* on mankind!

Move on, Oh Lord, in thy resistless path!
Till thy high noon o'erspreads the world;
Till every land reflects thy light;
Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!

July, 5.

That evening someone pained him by counting the cherry-stones left on her plate, to see when she would be married. He, somehow, took the play in earnest, and came, the following morning, surcharged with passion for the ideal renunciation.

July, 6.

"These shadows of home and marriage cross even *my* mind now and then!" he cried, with that tender desire to make himself one with the sinner that he so often showed. But it was across oceans of scorn for those who would glorify the householder, that he sought, on this occasion, to preach the religious life. "Is it so easy," he exclaimed, "to be Janaka? To sit on a throne absolutely unattached? Caring nothing for wealth or fame, for wife or child? One after another in the West has told me that he had reached this. But I could only say—'such great men are not born in India'!"

And then he turned to the other side.

"Never forget," he said to one of his hearers, "to say to yourself, and to teach your children, 'as is the difference between a firefly and the blazing sun, between the infinite ocean and a little pond, between a mustard-seed and the mountain of Meru, SUCH is the difference between the householder and the Sannyasin!"

"Everything is fraught with fear: Renunciation alone is fearless."

"Blessed be even the fraudulent Sadhus, and those who have failed to carry out their vows, in as much as they also have witnessed to the ideal, and so are in some degree the cause of the success of others!"

"Let us never, never, forget our ideal!"

At such moments, he would identify himself entirely with the thought he sought to demonstrate, and in the same sense in which a law of nature might be deemed

cruel or arrogant, his exposition might have those qualities. Sitting and listening, we felt ourselves brought face to face with the invisible and absolute.

All this was on our return to Srinagar, from the real Fourth of July Celebration, which had been a visit to the Dahl Lake. There we had seen the Shalimar Bagh of Nur Mahal, and the Nishat Bagh, or Garden of Gladness, and had spent the hour of sunset quietly, amongst the green of the irises, at the foot of giant chennaar trees.

That same day, *Dhira Mata* and she whose name was *Jaya,* left for Gulmarg, on some personal business, and the Swami went with them, part of the way.

At nine o'clock on the evening of the following Sunday, July the 10th, the first two came back unexpectedly, and presently, from many different sources, we gathered the news that the Master had gone to Amarnath by the Sonamarg route, and would return another way. He had started out penniless, but that could give no concern to his friends, in a Hindu Native state.

A disagreeable incident occurred, a day or two later, when a young man, eager to become a disciple, turned up, and insisted on being sent on to him. It was felt that this was an unwarrantable intrusion on that privacy which he had gone to seek, but as the request was persistent, it was granted, and life flowed in accustomed channels for a day or two.

Friday, July, 15.

What were we setting out for? We were just moving to go down the river, and it was close on five in the afternoon, when the servants recognised some of their friends in the distance, and word was brought that the Swami's boat was coming towards us.

And hour later, he was with us, saying how pleasant it was to be back. The summer had been unusually hot and certain glaciers had given way, rendering the Sonamarg

route to Amarnath impracticable. This fact had caused his return.

But from this moment dated the first of three great increments of joy and realisation that we saw in him, during our months in Kashmir. It was almost as if we could verify for ourselves the truth of that saying of his Guru—

"There is indeed a certain ignorance. It has been placed there by my Holy Mother that her work may be done. But it is only like a film of tissue paper. It might be rent at any moment."

Chapter VIII

THE TEMPLE OF PANDRENTHAN

Persons:—The Swami Vivekananda and a party of Europeans, amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the 'Steady Mother'; 'One whose name was Jaya,' and Nivedita.
Place:—Kashmir.
Time:—July, 16th to 19th

July, 16.

It fell to the lot of one of the Swami's disciples, next day, to go down the river with him in a small boat. As it went, he chanted one song after another of Ram Prasad, and now and again, he would translate a verse.

"I call upon thee Mother.
For though his mother strike him,
The child cries "Mother! Oh Mother."

* * * *

"Though I cannot see Thee,
I am not a lost child!
I still cry 'Mother! Mother'!"—

* * * *

and then with the haughty dignity of an offended child, something that ended—"I am not the son to call *any* other woman 'Mother'!"

July, 17.

It must have been next day, that he came into *Dhira Mata's* dunga, and talked of Bhakti. First it was that curious Hindu thought of Shiva and Uma in one. It is easy to give the words, but without the voice, how comparatively dead they seem! And then there were the wonderful surroundings—picturesque Srinagar, tall Lom-

bardy poplars, and distant snows. There, in that river-valley, some space from the foot of the great mountains, he chanted to us how "The Lord took a form and that was a divided form, half woman, and half man. On one side, beautiful garlands: on the other, bone earrings, and coils of snakes. On one side the hair black, beautiful, and in curls—on the other, twisted like rope." And then passing immediately into the other form of the same thought, he quoted—

"God became Krishna and Radha—
Love flows in thousands of coils.
Whoso wants, takes it.
Love flows in thousands of coils—
The tide of love and loving past,
And fills the soul with bliss and joy!"

So absorbed was he that his breakfast stood unheeded long after it was ready, and when at last he went reluctantly,—saying, 'When one has all this Bhakti what does one want with food?'—it was only to come back again quickly, and resume the subject.

But, either now or at some other time, he said that he did not talk of Radha and Krishna, where he looked for deeds. It was Shiva who made stern and earnest workers, and to Him the labourer must be dedicated.

The next day, he gave us a quaint saying of Sri Ramakrishna, comparing the critics of others to bees or flies, according as they chose honey or wounds.

And then we were off to Islamabad, and really, as it proved, to Amarnath.

July, 19.

The first afternoon, in a wood by the side of the Jhelum, we discovered the long-sought Temple of Pandrenthan (Pandresthan, place of the Pandavas?)

It was sunk in a pond, and this was thickly covered

with scum, out of which it rose, a tiny cathedral of the long ago, built of heavy grey limestone. The temple consisted of a small cell, with four doorways, opening to the cardinal points. Externally, it was a tapering pyramid,—with its top truncated, to give foothold to a bush—supported on a four-pierced pedestal. In its architecture, trefoil and triangular arches were combined, in an unusual fashion, with each other, and with the straight-lined lintel. It was built with marvellous solidity, and the necessary lines were somewhat obscured by heavy ornament.

We were all much distressed, on arriving at the edge of the pond in the wood, to be unable to go inside the little temple, and examine the interior decorations, which a number of guide-books declared to be "quite classical," that is to say, Greek or Roman, in form and finish!

Our grief was turned into joy, however, when our *hajjis,* or boatmen, brought up a countryman, who undertook to provide a boat for us. This he brought out, *from under the scum,* and placing a chain on it, he proceeded to drag us each in turn about the lake, himself wading almost waist-deep in the water. So we were able, as we had desired, to go inside.

For all but the Swami himself, this was our first peep at Indian archæology. So when he had been through it, he taught us how to observe the interior.

In the centre of the ceiling was a large sun-medallion, set in a square whose points were the points of the compass. This left four equal triangles, at the corners of the ceiling, which were filled with sculpture in low relief, male and female figures intertwined with serpents, beautifully done. On the wall were empty spaces, where seemed to have been a band of topes.

Outside, carvings were similarly distributed. In one of the trefoil arches—over, I think, the eastern door,—was a fine image of the Teaching Buddha, standing, with His hand uplifted. Running round the buttresses was a much-defaced frieze of a seated woman, with a tree,—evidently

Maya Devi, the Mother of Buddha. The three other door-niches were empty, but a slab by the pond-side seemed to have fallen from one, and this contained a bad figure of a king, said by the country-people to represent the sun. The masonry of this little temple was superb, and probably accounted for its long preservation. A single block of stone would be so cut as to correspond, not to one brick in a wall, but to a section of the architect's plan. It would turn a corner and form part of two distinct walls, or sometimes even of three. This fact made one take the building as very, very old, possibly even earlier than Marttanda. The theory of the workmen seemed so much more that of carpentering than of building! The water about it, was probably an overflow, into the temple-court, from the sacred spring that the chapel itself may have been placed, as the Swami thought, to enshrine.

To him, the place was delightfully suggestive. It was a direct memorial of Buddhism, representing one of the four religious periods into which he had already divided the History of Kashmir:

(1) Tree and Snake-worship, from which dated all the names of the springs ending in Nag, as Verinag, and so on ; (2) Buddhism ; (3) Hinduism, in the form of Sun-worship ; and (4) Mohammedanism. Sculpture, he told us, was the characteristic art of Buddhism, and the sun-medallion, or lotus, one of its commonest ornaments. The figures with the serpents referred to pre-Buddhism. But sculpture had greatly deteriorated under Sun-worship, hence the crudity of the Surya figure.

And then we left the little temple in the woods. What had it held, that men might worship, nearly eighteen centuries ago,* when the world was big, with the births of mighty things? We could not tell. We could only guess. Meanwhile, to one thing we could bow the knee,—the

* We assumed Pandrenthan, when we saw it, to be of Kanishka's time, 150 A. D.—I am not sure that it is really so old—N.

Teaching Buddha. One picture we could conjure up—the great wood-built city, with this at its heart, long years afterwards destroyed by fire, and now moved some five miles away. And so, with a dream and a sigh, we wended our way back through the trees, to the riverside.

It was the time of sunset,—such a sunset! The mountains in the west were all a shimmering purple. Further north, they were blue with snow and cloud. The sky was green and yellow and touched with red,—bright flame and daffodil colours, against a blue and opal background. We stood and looked, and then the Master, catching sight of the throne of Solomon—that little Takt which we already loved—exclaimed, "what genius the Hindu shows in placing his temples! He always chooses a grand scenic effect! See! The Takt commands the whole of Kashmir. The rock of Hari Parbat rises red out of blue water, like a lion couchant, crowned. And the Temple of Marttanda has the valley at its feet!"

Our boats were moored near the edge of the wood, and we could see that the presence of the silent chapel, of the Buddha, which we had just explored, moved the Swami deeply. That evening we all foregathered in *Dhira Mata's* houseboat, and a little of the conversation has been noted down.

Our Master had been talking of Christian ritual as derived from Buddhist, but one of the party would have none of the theory.

"Where did Buddhist ritual itself come from?" she asked.

"From Vedic," answered the Swami briefly.

"Or as it was present also in southern Europe, is it not better to suppose a common origin for it, and the Christian, and the Vedic rituals?"

"No! No!" he replied. "You forget that Buddhism was entirely within Hinduism! Even caste was not attacked—it was not yet crystallised, of course!—and Buddha merely tried to restore the ideal. *He who attains*

to God in this life, says Manu, *is the Brahmin.* Buddha would have had it so, if he could."

"But how are Vedic and Christian rituals connected?" persisted his opponent. "How *could* they be the same? You have nothing even corresponding to the central rite of our worship!"

"Why, yes!" said the Swami, "Vedic ritual has its Mass, the offering of food to God, your Blessed Sacrament, our Prasadam. Only it is offered sitting, not kneeling, as is common in hot countries. They kneel in Thibet. Then, too, Vedic ritual has its lights, incense, music."

"But," was the somewhat ungracious argument, "has it any common prayer?" Objections urged in this way always elicited some bold paradox which contained a new and unthought-of generalisation.

He flashed down on the question. "No! and neither had Christianity! That is pure Protestantism and Protestantism took it from the Mohammedans, perhaps through Moorish influence!

"Mohammedanism is the only religion that has completely broken down the idea of the priest. The leader of prayer stands with his back to the people, and only the reading of the Koran may take place from the pulpit. Protestantism is an approach to this.

"Even the tonsure existed in India, in the shaven head. I have seen a picture of Justinian receiving the Law from two monks, in which the monks' heads are entirely shaven. The monk and nun both existed, in pre-Buddhistic Hinduism. Europe gets her orders from the Thebaid."

"At that rate, then, you accept Catholic ritual as Aryan!"

"Yes, almost all Christianity is Aryan, I believe. I am inclined to think Christ never existed. I have doubted that, ever since I had my dream,—that dream off Crete!*

* In travelling from Naples to Port Said, on his way back to India, in January 1897, the Swami had a dream of an old and bearded man, who appeared before him, saying "This is the island of Crete," and showing

Indian and Egyptian ideas met at Alexandria, and went forth to the world, tinctured with Judaism and Hellenism, as Christianity.

"The Acts and Epistles, you know, are older than the Gospels, and S. John is spurious. The only figure we can be sure of is S. Paul, and he was not an eye-witness, and according to his own showing was capable of Jesuitry—'by all means save souls'—isn't it?

"No! Buddha and Mohammed, alone amongst religious teachers, stand out with historic distinctness,—having been fortunate enough to have, while they were living, enemies as well as friends. Krishna—I doubt: a Yogi, and a shepherd, and a great king, have all been amalgamated in one beautiful figure, holding the Gita in his hand.

"Renan's life of Jesus is mere froth. It does not touch Strauss, the real antiquarian. Two things stand out as personal living touches in the life of Christ,—the woman taken in adultery,—the most beautiful story in literature,—and the woman at the well. How strangely true is this last, to Indian life! A woman, coming to draw water, finds, seated at the well-side, a yellow-clad monk. He asks her for water. Then He teaches her, and does a little

went to say that the religion of Christianity had originated in the island of Crete and in connection with this gave him two European words,—one of which was *Therapeutæ*—which it declared, were derived from Sanskrit. *Therapeutæ* meant sons (from the Sanskrit *putra*) of the Theras, or Buddhist monks. From this the Swami was to understand that Christianity had originated in a Buddhist mission. The old man added "The proofs are all here," pointing to the ground. "Dig and you will see!"

As he awoke, feeling that this was no common dream, the Swami rose, and tumbled out on deck. Here he met an officer, turning in from his watch. "What o'clock is it?"—said the Swami. "Midnight!"—was the answer. "Where are we?"—he then said; when, to his astonishment, the answer came back—"fifty miles off Crete!"

Our Master used to laugh at himself for the strength of the impression that this dream had made on him. But he could never shake it off. The fact that the second of the two etymologies has been lost, is deeply to be regretted. The Swami had to say that before he had this dream, it had never occurred to him to doubt that the personality of Christ was strictly historic. We must remember, however, that according to Hindu philosophy, it is the completeness of an idea that is important, and not the question of its historical authenticity. The Swami once asked Sri Ramakrishna, when he was a boy, about this very matter. "Dont't you think!" answered his Guru, "that those who could invent such things were themselves that?"

mind-reading and so on. Only in an Indian story, when she went to call the villagers, to look and listen, the monk would have taken his chance, and fled to the forest!

"On the whole, I think old Rabbi Hillel is responsible for the teachings of Jesus, and an obscure Jewish sect of Nazarenes—a sect of great antiquity—suddenly galvanised by S. Paul, furnished the mythic personality, as a centre of worship.

"The Resurrection, of course, is simply spring-cremation. Only the rich Greeks and Romans had had cremation any way, and the new sun-myth would only stop it amongst the few.

"But Buddha! Buddha! Surely he was the greatest man who ever lived. He never drew a breath for himself. Above all, he never claimed worship. He said, 'Buddha is not a man, but a state. I have found the door. Enter, all of you'!"

"He went to the feast of Ambapali, 'the sinner.' He dined with the pariah, though he knew it would kill him, and sent a message to his host on his death-bed, thanking him for the great deliverance. Full of love and pity for a little goat, even before he had attained the truth! You remember how he offered his own head, that of prince and monk, if only the king would spare the kid that he was about to sacrifice and how the king was struck by his compassion, that he saved its life? Such a mixture of rationalism and feeling was never seen! Surely, surely, there was none like him!"

Chapter IX

WALKS AND TALKS BESIDE THE JHELUM

Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda, and a party of Europeans, amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the 'Steady Mother'; 'One whose name was Jaya'; and Nivedita.
Place :—Kashmir.
Time :—July 20th to July 29th, 1898.

July, 20.

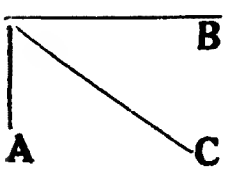
Next day, we came to the ruins of the two great temples of Avantipur. Each hour, as we went deeper and deeper into the interior, the river and the mountains grew more lively. And amidst the immediate attractions of fields and trees, and people with whom we felt thoroughly at home, how difficult it was to remember that we were exploring a stream in Central Asia! To those who have seen Kashmir in any season, a wealth of memory is called up, by Kalidas' picture of the spring-forest, in all its beauty of wild cherry-blossom, and almond and apple,—that forest, in which Shiva sits beneath a deodar, when Uma, princess of the Himalaya, enters with her offering of a lotus-seed garland, while close at hand stands the beautiful young god with his quiver and bow of flowers. All that is divine in an English spring, or lovely in the woods of Normandy, at Eastertide, is gathered up and multiplied, in the charms of the Vale of Kashmir.

That morning, the river was broad and shallow and clear, and two of us walked with the Swami, across the fields and along the banks, about three miles. He began by talking of the sense of sin, how it was Egyptian, Semitic and Aryan. It appears in the Vedas, but quickly passes out. The Devil is recognised there, as the Lord of Anger. Then, with the Buddhists, he became Mara, the Lord of Lust, and one of the most loved of the Lord Buddha's titles

was "conqueror of Mara," *vide* the Sanskrit lexicon (Amarkosha) that Swami learnt to patter, as a child of four! But while Satan is the Hamlet of the Bible, in the Hindu scriptures, the Lord of Anger never divides creation. He always represents defilement. never duality.

Zoroaster was a reformer of some old religion. Even Ormuzd and Ahriman, with him, were not supreme: they were only manifestations of the Supreme. That older religion must have been Vedantic. So the Egyptians and Semites cling to the theory of sin, while the Aryans, as Indians and Greeks, quickly lose it. In India, righteousness and sin become Vidya and Avidya,—both to be transcended. Amongst the Aryans, Persians and Europeans become Semitised, by religious ideas, hence the sense of sin.*

And then the talk drifted, as it was always so apt to do, to questions of the country and the future. What idea must be urged on a people, to give them strength? The line of their own development runs in one way, A. Must the new accession of force be a compensating one, B? This would produce a development midway between the two, C, a geometrical alteration, merely. But it was not so. National life was a question of organic forces. We must reinforce the current of that life itself, and leave it to do the rest. Buddha preached renunciation, and India heard. Yet within a thousand years, she had reached her highest point of national prosperity. The national life in India has renunciation as its source. Its highest ideals are service and Mukti. The Hindu mother eats last. Marriage is not for individual happiness, but for the welfare of the nation and the caste. Certain individuals of the modern reform, having embarked on an experiment which could not solve



* One of those who listened to this talk, had a wonderful opportunity, later, of appreciating the accuracy, as well as the breadth of the Swami's knowledge, when she saw two Parsis glad to sit at his feet, and learn from him the history of their own religious ideas.—N.

the problem, "are the sacrifices, over which the race has to walk."

And then the trend of conversation changed again, and became all fun and merriment, jokes and stories. And as we laughed and listened, the boats came up, and talk was over for the day.

The whole of that afternoon and night, the Swami lay in his boat, ill. But next day, when we landed at the temple of Bijbehara—already thronged with Amarnath pilgrims—he was able to join us for a little while. "Quickly up and quickly down," as he said of himself, was always his characteristic. After that, he was with us most of the day, and in the afternoon, we reached Islamabad.

The Dungas were moored beside an apple-orchard. Grass grew down to the water's edge, and dotted over the lawn stood the apple and pear and even plum trees, that a Hindu state used to think it necessary to plant, outside each village. In spring-time, it seemed to us, this spot must be that very Island-Valley of Avilion.

"Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow.
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies,
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns,
And bowery hollows, crowned with summer sea."

The houseboat, in which two of us lived, could not be taken so far, so it came to rest in a very deep and rapid portion of the stream, between high hedges, and how beautiful was the walk, from the one point to the other, under the avenue of poplars, with the wonderful green of young rice on either hand!

In the dusk that evening, one came into the little group amongst the apple trees, and found the Master engaged in the rarest of rare happenings, a personal talk with *Dhira Mata*, and her whose name was Jaya. He had taken two pebbles into his hand, and was saying how, when he was well, his mind might direct itself to this and that, or his will might seem less firm, but let the least touch of pain or illness come, let him look death in the face for a while,

and "I am as hard as that (knocking the stones together), for I *have* touched the feet of God." And one remembered, *apropos* of this coolness, the story of a walk across the fields, in England, where he and an Englishman and woman had been pursued by an angry bull. The Englishman frankly ran, and reached the other side of the hill in safety. The woman as far as she could, and then sank to the ground, incapable of further effort. Seeing this, and unable to aid her, the Swami,—thinking "So *this* is the end, after all"—took up his stand in front of her, with folded arms. He told afterwards how his mind was occupied with a mathematical calculation, as to how far the bull would be able to throw. But the animal suddenly stopped, a few paces off, and then, raising his head, retreated sullenly.

A like courage—though he himself was far from thinking of these incidents—had shown itself, in his early youth, when he quietly stepped up to a runaway horse, and caught it, in the streets of Calcutta, thus saving the life of the woman, who occupied the carriage behind.

The talk drifted on, as we sat on the grass beneath the trees, and became, for an hour or two, half grave, half gay. We heard much of the tricks the monkeys could play, in Brindavan. And we elicited stories of two separate occasions in his wandering life, when he had had clear previsions of help, which had been fulfilled. One of these I remember. It may possibly have occurred at the time when he was under the vow to ask for nothing, and he had been several days (perhaps five) without food. Suddenly, as he lay, almost dying of exhaustion, in a railway-station, it flashed into his mind that he must rise up, and go out along a certain road, and that there he would meet a man, bringing him help. He obeyed, and met one, carrying a tray of food. "Are you he to whom I was sent?" said this man, coming up to him, and looking at him closely.

Then a child was brought to us, with its hand badly cut, and the Swami applied an old wives' cure. He bathed the wound with water, and then laid on it, to stop the

bleeding, the ashes of a piece of calico. The villagers were soothed and consoled, and our gossip was over for the evening.

July, 23.

The next morning, a motley gathering of coolies assembled beneath the apple-trees and waited some hours, to take us to the ruins of Marttanda. It had been a wonderful old building—evidently more abbey than temple,—in a wonderful position, and its great interest lay in the obvious agglomeration of styles and periods in which it had grown up. Never can I forget the deep black shadows under the series of arches that confronted us, as we entered in mid-afternoon, with the sun directly behind us, in the west. There were three arches, one straight behind the other, and just within the farthest of them, at two-thirds of its height, a heavy straight-lined window top. The arches were all trefoil, but only the first and second showed this, as we saw them at the moment of entering. The place had evidently originated as three small rectangular temples, built, with heavy blocks of stone, round sacred springs. The style of these three chambers was all straight-lined, severe. Taking the middle and furthest East of the three, some later king had built round it an enclosing wall, placing a trefoil arch outside each low lintel-formed doorway, without interfering with the original in any way, and then had added to it in front, a larger nave, with a tall trefoil arch as entrance. Each building had been so perfect, and the motive of the two epochs of construction was so clear that the plan of the temple was pure delight, and until one had drawn it, one could not stop. The Dharmashala or cloister, round the central building, was extraordinarily Gothic in shape, and to one who has seen this, and the royal tombs of Mohammedanism in the north of India, it is at once suggested that the cloister is, ideally, the whole of a monastery, and though, in our cold climates, it cannot be so retained, its presence is a perpetual reminder that the

East was the original home of monasticism. The Swami was hard at work, in an instant, on observations and theories, pointing out the cornice that ran along the nave from the entrance to the sanctuary, to the west, surmounted by the high trefoils of the two arches and also by a frieze : or showing us the panels containing cherubs : and before we had done, had picked up a couple of coins. The ride back, through the sun-set light, was charming. From all these hours, the day before and the day after, fragments of talk come back to me.

"No nation, not Greek or another, has ever carried patriotism so far as the Japanese. They don't talk, they act—give up all for country. There are noblemen now living in Japan as peasants, having given up their princedoms without a word to create the unity of the empire.* And not one traitor could be found in the Japanese war. Think of that!"

Again, talking of the inability of some to express feeling, "Shy and reserved people, I have noticed, are always the most brutal when roused."

Again, evidently talking of the ascetic life, and giving the rules of Brahmacharya—"The Sannyasin who thinks of gold, to desire it, commits suicide," and so on.

July, 24.

The darkness of night and the forest, a great pinefire under the trees, two or three tents standing out white in the blackness, the forms and voices of many servants at their fires in the distance, and the Master with three disciples, such is the next picture. Of the road to Verinag, under the apple-orchards and along the common-sides, of the pouring rain, and the luncheon in the hard-won sunshine, of that grand old palace of Jehangir, with its octagonal tank at the foot of the pine-wooded hills, much might be said. But the crown of the day came in the

* This is, I think, a mistake. It was their political privileges, not their estates, that the Japanese samurais renounced.

hours after dinner, when we were, at long last, alone, and the constant file of visitors and worshippers, with their gifts, had ceased. Suddenly the Master turned to one member of the party and said, "You never mention your school now, do you sometimes forget it? You see," he went on, "I have much to think of. One day I turn to Madras, and think of the work there. Another day I give all my attention to America or England or Ceylon or Calcutta. Now I am thinking about yours."

At that moment the Master was called away to dine, and not till he came back could the confidence he had invited, be given.

He listened to it all, the deliberate wish for a tentative plan, for smallness of beginnings, and the final inclination to turn away from the idea of inclusiveness and breadth, and to base the whole of an educational effort on the religious life, and on the worship of Sri Ramakrishna.

"Because you must be sectarian to get that enthusiasm, must you not?" he said. "You will make a sect in order to rise above all sects. Yes I understand."

There would be obvious difficulties. The thing sounded, on this scale, almost impossible, for many reasons. But for the moment the only care need be to will rightly, and if the plan was sound, ways and means would be found to hand, that was sure.

He waited a little when he had heard it all, and then he said, "You ask me to criticise, but that I cannot do. For I regard you as inspired, quite as much inspired as I am. You know that's the difference between other religions and us. Other people believe their founder was inspired, and so do we. But so am I, also, just as much so as he, and you as I, and after you, your girls and their disciples will be. So I shall help you to do what you think best."

Then he turned to Dhira Mata and to Jaya, and spoke of the greatness of the trust that he would leave in the hands of that disciple who should represent the interests of women, when he should go west, of how it would exceed

the responsibility of work for men. And he added, turning to the worker of the party, "Yes, you have faith, but you have not that burning enthusiasm that you need. You want to be consumed energy. Shiva! Shiva!"—and so, invoking the blessing of Mahadeva, he said goodnight and left us, and we, presently, went to bed.

July, 25.

The next morning, we breakfasted early, in one of the tents, and went on to Achhabal. One of us had had a dream of old jewels lost and restored, all bright and new. But the Swami, smiling, stopped the tale, saying "Never talk of a dream as good as that!"

At Achhabal, we found more gardens of Jehangir. Was it here, or at Verinag, that had been his favourite resting-place?

We roamed about the gardens, and bathed in a still pool opposite the Pathan Khan's Zenana, and then we lunched in the first garden, and rode down in the afternoon to Islamabad.

As we sat at lunch, the Swami invited his daughter to go to the Cave of Amarnath with him, and be dedicated to Shiva. Dhira Mata smiled permission, and the next half-hour was given to pleasure and congratulations. It had already been arranged that we were all to go to Pahlgam and wait there for the Swami's return from the pilgrimage. So we reached the boats that evening, packed, and wrote letters, and next day in the afternoon, started for Bawan.

Chapter X

THE SHRINE OF AMARNATH

Place :—Kashmir.
Time :—July 29th to August 8th, 1898.

July, 29.

From this time we saw very little of the Swami. He was full of enthusiasm about the pilgrimage and lived mostly on one meal a day, seeking no company much, save that of Sadhus. Sometimes he would come to a camping-ground, beads in hand. Tonight two of the party went roaming about Bawan, which was like a village fair, all modified by a religious tendency, centering in the sacred springs. Afterwards, with Dhira Mata it was possible to go and listen, at the tent door, to the crowd of Hindi-speaking Sadhus who were plying the Swami with questions.

On Thursday, we reached Pahlgam, and camped down at the lower end of the valley. We found that the Swami had to encounter high opposition over the question of our admission at all. He was supported by the Naked Swamis, one of whom said, "It is true you have this strength, Swamiji, but you ought not to manifest it!" He yielded at the word. That afternoon however, he took his daughter round the camp to be blessed, which really meant to distribute alms,—and whether because he was looked upon as rich, or because he was recognised as strong, the next day our tents were moved up to a lovely knoll, at the head of the camp, where we had the rushing Lidar in front of us, and pine-covered mountains opposite, with a glacier distinctly visible, beyond a cleft high up. We stayed a whole day, at this village, of the shepherds, to keep Ekadashi, and early next morning the pilgrims left.

July, 30.

At six in the morning we had breakfasted and were off. What time the camp had moved, it seemed impossible to guess, for even at our early meal-time very few pilgrims or tents were left. The ashes of dead fires were all that marked the place where yesterday had been a thousand people and their canvas homes.

How beautiful was the route to the next halt, Chandanwara! There we camped on the edge of a ravine. It rained all afternoon, and I was visited by the Swami only for a five-minute's chat. But I received endless touching little kindnesses from the servants and other pilgrims. In the interval between two showers I went out botanising, and found seven or eight species of *Myesotis*, two of which were new to me. Then I went back to the shadow of my dripping fir-tree.

The second stage was much harder than any of the others. It seemed endless. Close to Chandanwara, the Swami insisted on my doing my first glacier on foot, and took care to point out every detail of interest. A tremendous climb of some thousands of feet, was the next experience. Then a long walk along a narrow path that twisted round mountain after mountain, and finally another steep climb. At the top of the first mountain, the ground was simply carpeted with edelwiess. Then the road passed five hundred feet above Sheshnag, with its sulky water, and at last we camped in a cold damp place, amongst the snow-peaks, 18000 feet high. The firs were far below, and all afternoon and evening the coolies had to forage for juniper in all directions. The Tehsildar's, Swami's and my own tents were all close together, and in the evening a large fire was lighted in front. But it did not burn well, and many feet below lay the glacier. I did not see the Swami after we camped.

Panchatarani—the place of the five streams—was not nearly such a long march. Moreover, it was lower than Sheshnag, and the cold was dry and exhilarating. In front

of the camp was a dry river-bed, all gravel, and through this ran five streams, in all which it was the duty of the pilgrim to bathe, walking from one to the other in wet garments. Contriving to elude observation completely, Swamiji nevertheless fulfilled the law to the last letter in this respect.

How lovely were the flowers! The night before, or was it this night? large blue and white anemones grew in my tent, beneath my bed! And here, wandering off, in the afternoon, to see a glacier at closer quarters, I found gentian, sedums, saxifrages, and a new forget-me-not with little hairy silver leaves, thick like velvet pile. Even of juniper at this place there was very little.

At these heights we often found ourselves in great circles of snow-peaks, those mute giants that have suggested to the Hindu mind the idea of the Ash-encovered God.

August, 2.

On Tuesday, August the 2nd, the great day of Amarnath, the first batch of pilgrims must have left the camp at two! We left by the light of the full moon. The sun rose as we went down the narrow valley. It was not too safe, at this part of the journey. But when we left our Dandies and began to climb, the real danger began. A sort of goat-path in almost vertical hillsides, becoming in the descent on the other side, a tiny staircase in the turf. Every here and there, delicate columbines, Michælmas daisies, and wild roses, tempted one to risk life and limb in their acquisition. Then, having at last reached the bottom of the farther slope, we had to toil along the glacier, mile after mile, to the Cave. About a mile before our destination, the ice ceased, and in the flowing water the pilgrims had to bathe. Even when we seemed to have arrived, there was still quite a stiff ascent over the rocks to be made.

The Swami, exhausted, had by this time, fallen behind, but I, not remembering that he might be ill, waited, below

the banks of gravel for his appearance. He came at last, and, with a word, sent me on, he was going to bathe. Half an hour later he entered the cave. With a smile he knelt, first at one end of the semi-circle, then at the other. The place was vast, large enough to hold a cathedral, and the great ice-Shiva, in a niche of deepest shadow, seemed as if throned on its own base. A few minutes passed, and then he turned to leave the cave.

To him, the heavens had opened. He had touched the feet of Shiva. He had had to hold himself tight, he said afterwards, lest he 'should swoon away.' But so great was his physical exhaustion, that a doctor said afterwards that his heart ought to have stopped beating, and had undergone a permanent enlargement instead. How strangely near fulfilment had been those words of his Master, "when he realises who and what he is he will give up this body!"

"I have enjoyed it so much!" he said half an hour afterwards, as he sat on a rock above the stream-side, eating lunch with the kind Naked Swami and myself. "I thought the ice-lingam was Shiva Himself. And there were no thievish Brahmins, no trade, nothing wrong. It was all worship. I never enjoyed any religious place so much!"

Afterwards he would often tell of the overwhelming vision that had seemed to draw him almost into its vertex. He would talk of the poetry of the white ice-pillar, and it was he who suggested that the first discovery of the place had been by a party of shepherds, who had wandered far in search of their flocks one summer day, and had entered the cave to find themselves, before the unmelting ice, in the presence of the Lord Himself. He always said too that the grace of Amarnath had been granted to him there, not to die till he himself should give consent. And to me he said, "You do not now understand. But you have made the pilgrimage, and it will go on working. Causes must bring their effects. You will understand better afterwards. The effects will come."

How beautiful was the road by which we returned next morning to Pahlgam. We struck tents that night immediately on our return to them, and camped later for the night in a snowy pass a whole stage further on. We paid a coolie a few annas here, to push on with a letter, but when we actually arrived next afternoon we found that this had been quite unnecessary, for all morning long, relays of pilgrims had been passing the tents, and dropping in, in the most friendly manner, to give the others news of us, and our impending arrival. In the morning, we were up and on the way long before dawn. As the sun rose before us, while the moon went down behind, we passed above the Lake of Death, into which about forty pilgrims had been buried one year, by an avalanche which their hymns had started. After this we came to the tiny goat-path down the face of a steep cliff, by which we were able to shorten the return journey so much. This was little better than a scramble, and everyone had perforce to do it on foot. At the bottom, the villagers had something like breakfast ready. Fires were burning, Chapatties baking, and tea ready to be served out. From this time on, parties of pilgrims would leave the main body at each parting of the ways, and the feeling of solidarity that had grown up amongst us all throughout the journey became gradually less and less.

That evening on the knoll above Pahlgam, where a great fire of pine-logs was lighted, and Durries spread we all sat and talked. Our friend, the Naked Swami, joined us and we had plenty of fun and nonsense, but presently, when all had gone save our own little party, we sat on, with the great moon overhead, and the towering snows, and rushing river, and the mountain-pines. And the Swami talked of Shiva, and the Cave and the great verge of vision.

August, 8.

We started for Islamabad next day, and on Monday morning as we sat at breakfast, we were towed safely into Srinagar.

Chapter XI

AT SRINAGAR ON THE RETURN JOURNEY

Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda, and a party of Europeans, amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the 'Steady Mother'; 'One whose name was Jaya,' and Nivedita.
Place :— Kashmir—Srinagar
Time :— August 9th to August 13th.

August, 9

At this time the Master was always talking of leaving us. And when I find the entry "The River is pure that flows, the monk is pure that goes," I know exactly what it means—the passionate outcry "I am always so much better when I have to undergo hardships and beg my bread," the longing for freedom and the touch of the common people, the picture of himself making a long circuit of the country on foot, and meeting us again at Baramulla for the journey home.

His family of boat-people, whom he had staunchly befriended through two seasons, left us today. Afterwards he would refer to the whole incident of their connection with him as proof that even charity and patience could go too far.

August, 10

It was evening, and we all went out to pay some visit. On the return he called his disciple Nivedita to walk with him across the fields. His talk was all about the work and his intentions in it. He spoke of the inclusiveness of his conception of the country and its religions: of his own distinction as being solely in his desire to make Hinduism active, aggressive, a missionary faith: of 'don't-touch-ism' as the only thing he repudiated. Then he talked with depth of feeling of the gigantic spirituality of many of those who were most orthodox. India wanted practicality,

but she must never let go her hold on the old meditative life for that. "To be as deep as the ocean and as broad as the sky"—Sri Ramakrishna has said, was the ideal. But this profound inner life in the soul encased within orthodoxy, is the result of an accidental not an essential association. "And if we set ourselves right here, the world will be right, for are we not all one?" "Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was alive to the depths of his being, yet on the outer plane he was perfectly active and capable."

And then of that critical question of the worship of his own Master, "My own life is guided by the enthusiasm, of that great personality, but others will decide for themselves how far this is true for them. Inspiration is not filtered out to the world through one man."

August, 11

There was occasion this day for the Swami to rebuke a member of this party for practising palmistry. It was a thing he said that everyone desired, yet all India despised and hated. Yes, he said, in reply to a little special pleading, even of character-reading he disapproved. "To tell you the truth I should have thought even your Incarnation more honest if He and His disciples had not performed miracles. Buddha unfrocked a monk for doing it." Later, talking on the subject to which he had now transferred his attention, he spoke with horror of the display of the least of it as sure to bring a terrible reflex.

August, 12 and 13

The Swami had now taken a Brahmin cook. Very touching had been the arguments of the Amarnath Sadhus against his willingness to let even a Mussalman cook for him. "Not in the land of Shikhs, at least Swamiji" they had said, and he had at last consented. But for the present he was worshipping his little Mohammedan boat-child as Uma. Her whole idea of love was service, and the day he left Kashmir, she, tiny one, was fain to carry a tray of apples

for him all the way to the tonga herself. He never forgot her, though he seemed quite indifferent at the time. In Kashmir itself he was fond of recalling the time when she saw a blue flower on the towing path and sitting down before it, and striking it this way and that, "was alone with that flower for twenty minutes."

There was a piece of land by the riverside on which grew three chennaars, towards which our thoughts turned with peculiar love at this time. For the Maharaja was anxious to give it to Swamiji, and we all pictured it as a centre of work in the future-work which should realise the great idea of "by the people, for the people, as a joy to worker and to served."

In view of Indian feeling about a homestead blessed by women, it had been suggested that we should go and annex the site, by camping there for a while. One of our party moreover had a personal wish for special quiet at this time. So it was decided that we should establish 'a women's math', as it were, before the Maharaja should require the land, to confer it on the Swami. And this was possible because the spot was one of the minor camping grounds used by Europeans.

Chapter XII

THE CAMP UNDER THE CHENNAARS

Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda, and a party of Europeans, amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the 'Steady Mother'; 'One whose name was Jaya'; and Nivedita.
Place :— Kashmir—Srinagar.
Time :— August 14th to August 20th.

August, 14

It was Sunday morning and next afternoon the Swami was prevailed on to come up to tea with us, in order to meet a European guest, who seemed to be interested in the subject of Vedanta. He had been little inclined to concern himself with the matter, and I think his real motive in accepting, was probably to afford his too-eager disciples an opportunity of convincing themselves of the utter futility of all such attempts as this. Certainly he took infinite pains with the enquirer and as certainly his trouble was wasted. I remember his saying, amongst other things, "How I wish a law could be broken. If we were really able to break a law we should be free. What you call breaking the law, is really only another way of keeping it." Then he tried to explain a little of the super-conscious life. But his words fell on ears that could not hear.

August, 14

On Tuesday he came once more to our little camp to the midday meal. Towards the end, it began to rain heavily enough to prevent his return, and he took up Tod's "History of Rajasthan" which was lying near, and drifted into talk of Mira Bai. "Two-thirds of the national ideas now in Bengal," he said, "have been gathered from this book." But the episode of Mira Bai, the queen who would not be queen, but would wander the world with the lovers

of Krishna, was always his favourite, even in Tod. He talked of how she preached submission, prayerfulness, and service to all in contrast to Chaitanya, who preached love to the Name of God, and mercy to all. Mira Bai was always one of his great patronesses. He would put into her story many threads with which one is now familiar in other connections, such as the conversation of two great robbers, and the end by an image of Krishna opening and swallowing her up. I heard him on one occasion recite and translate one of her songs to a woman. I wish I could remember the whole, but it began, in his rendering, with the words, "Cling to it, cling to it, cling to it, Brother," and ended with "If Aunka and Bunka—the robber brothers, Sujana—the fell butcher, and the courtesan, who playfully taught her parrot to repeat the name of the Lord Krishna were saved, there is hope for all." Again I have heard him tell that marvellous tale of Mira Bai, in which on reaching Brindavana, she sent for a certain famous Sadhu.* He refused to go, on the ground that women might not see men in Brindavana. When this had happened three times, Mira Bai went to him herself saying that she had not known that there were such beings as men there, she had supposed that Krishna alone existed. And when she saw the astonished Sadhu she unveiled herself completely, with the words "Fool, do you call yourself a Man?" And as he fell prostrate before her with a cry of awe, she blessed him as a mother blesses her child.

Today the Swami passed on to the talk of Akbar, and sang us a song of Tanasena, the poet-laureate of the Emperor—

"Seated on the throne, a god amongst men,
Thou the Emperor of Delhi:
Blessed was the hour, the minute, the second,
When thou ascendest the throne,

* Sanatana, the famous Sannyasin disciple of Sri Chaitanya of Bengal, who gave up his office of minister to the Nawab of Bengal to become a religious devotee.

O God amongst men,
Thou the Lord of Delhi.
Long live thy crown, thy sceptre, thy throne.
O God amongst men,
Thou Emperor of Delhi:
Live long, and remain awakened always,
O son of Humayoon,
Joy of the sun, God amongst men,
Thou, the Emperor of Delhi!"

Then the talk passed to "our national hero" Pratap Singh, who never could be brought to submission. Once indeed he was tempted to give in, at that moment when, having fled from Chitore, and the queen herself having cooked the scanty evening meal, a hungry cat swooped down on that cake of bread which was the children's portion, and the King of Mewar heard his babies cry for food. Then, indeed, the strong heart of the man failed him. The prospect of ease and relief tempted him. And for a moment he thought of ceasing from the unequal conflict, and sending his alliance to Akbar, only for an instant. The Eternal Will protects its own. Even as the picture passed before his mind, there appeared a messenger, with those despatches from a famous Rajput chief, that said "There is but one left amongst us who has kept his blood free from admixture with the alien. Let it never be said that his head has touched the dust." And the soul of Pratap drew in the long breath of courage and renewed faith, and he arose and swept the country of its foes, and made his own way back to Oodeypore.

Then there was the wonderful tale of the virgin princess Krishna Kumari, whose hand was sought by various royal suitors at once. And when three armies were at the gate, her father could think of nothing better than to give her poison. The task was entrusted to her uncle, and he entered her room as she lay asleep to do it. But at the sight of her beauty and youth, remembering

her too as a baby, the soldier's heart failed him, and he could not perform his task. But she was awakened by some sound, and being told what was proposed, stretched out her hand for the cup, and drank the poison with a smile. And so on, and so on. For the stories of Rajput heroes in this kind are endless.

August, 20

On Saturday, the Swami and he whose name was Soong, went to the Dahl Lake, to be the guests of the American consul and his wife for a couple of days. They returned on Monday, and on Tuesday, the Swami came up to the new Math, as we called it, and had his boat moved close by ours, so that he could be with us for a few days, before leaving for Ganderbal.

Concluding words of the Editor.

From Ganderbal the Swami returned by the first week of October and announced his intention of leaving for the plains in a few days for urgent reasons. The European party had already made plans to visit the principal cities of Northern India *e.g.* Lahore, Delhi, Agra, etc., as soon as the winter set in. So both parties decided to return together and came to Lahore. From here the Swami and his party returned to Calcutta leaving the rest to carry out their plans for sight-seeing in Northern India.

APPENDIX

Some unpublished pages from the manuscript of the *Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda* written in continuation of the text printed so far.

Those were great days. The Prabuddha Bharata's first number had just arrived, and there was some thought of despatching Nivedita to Almora to help the Editor. The Swami stipulated that if this were done, she should at least see the great cities on the way,—and then he talked—Oh, how he talked! On Wednesday he translated for us the 'Hundred verses on Renunciation' and on Thursday he talked for hours of Sri Ramakrishna. Never had we heard so much of his Master from *his* lips before.

And as I look back on our time in Kashmir, I think that perhaps these two days contained, with one precious exception, the holiest hours of last year. That strange perspective-making influence of time comes in here, for I doubt if Jaya and Nivedita, comparing notes in their tent that night of Thursday, dreamt that they had had the three most notable days of the Summer. In the same way, the hours at Baramulla seemed more stupendous after hours had passed, than at the moment. For one thing, one is lifted, by such events, into the region where time is not, and it all seems obvious and natural. Then, alas, the mere drift of weeks into months, and months into years, exalts these memories, so that the Eternal Light shines full upon them, and we see with sorrow their inevitable difference from the dingy colours of the world and common life.

He had been telling us the story of Bilwamangal. Bilwamangal as a young man fell in love with a worthless woman named Chintamani. So intense was his passion for her that he delayed to leave her, even when he heard that his father was dead, and that he must come to bear him to the burning ghat.

Late at night, when he would return, the river that must be crossed was all swollen and in flood. But he found a log, and clinging to it, managed to reach the other shore. There, he found that his support had been the dead body of a man! He pushed on. The house was closed, and dark. He could not enter. Yet he found a rope hanging from a verandah, and by it he clambered up. It proved to have been a snake.

Breathless, he stood in the presence of his beloved, and she, surprised and smitten to the heart by his devotion, could only say—"If you had given a hundredth part of this love to God, you would be saved today!"

Such words, from her lips, arrested him—"Love God! *This* love to God!" He fled into the forest and for twelve years; there, he meditated on Krishna. The woman, meanwhile, married a rich merchant.

But when twelve years had come and gone, the hermit passed one day by a bathing-ghat, lifting his eyes by chance, he knew that one woman there was beautiful. She was a merchant's wife. Then he fasted for three days and at the end he persuaded the merchant to let him see his wife. It was Chintamani. He begged for two hairpins from her hair and with them putting out his eyes, he went back into his forest and *saw* Krishna, in His form of "Madhura, Madhura! The Sweetest, The Sweetest!" Such was the true story of Bilwamangal, the blind sage.

From this, in some easy way, the talk passed on to Monasticism and the ideal of simplicity and poverty round which Indian life is built. "The monk," he exclaimed at last, "is absolutely necessary for the deification of poverty!" and he quoted the words "Some say it is a great Saint, some say—don't you know?—it is the Devil himself. Some say it's a Chandala, some say it's a Brahamin—O Shiva, when shall I be like thee?" And then it was easy to pass on, through the salutation to Shiva, to the 'Hundred verses on Renunciation', written 57 years before Christ, by the ex-king, Bhartrihari, who abdicated in favour of his brother.

"I have travelled in many countries, hard to travel in,
And got no result
Giving up pride of birth and position
I have served all. . . . .

And then there was the long effort to explain the conception of Brahman, and make it still clearer.

"Then would you say, Swami"—said one—"that whatever God is, He includes Personality?" The Swami hesitated, and Jaya intervened—"Whatever GOD is, He includes *Personalities*!" and this was accepted at once as the formula.

"You see," said the Master, "there are three stages—Personal Gods—a Personal God—and the Absolute. Of these, the Personal God is the weakest. Ishwara is God in the Personal—Ishwara is God the Father. For instance, Brahman is behind God the Father. We reach That. And the Veda becomes non-Veda ; man non-man ; woman non-woman ; God non-god. See! I do not think there is another scripture in the world that will say of itself 'The Veda in all its branches is but secondary: That is supreme, through which man reaches the Supreme'—Krishna too is represented as saying, 'When a man reaches Brahman, he stands on my head'. And look how reasonable it is! As long as you have two, you have never reached the complete explanation. You know, ignorance always sees the Cause outside the Effect, and Science sees the cause *in* the effect. So, Dualism is ignorance ; and Adwaitism, Science."

Then there were the multitudinous comments on the great classic of Renunciation itself.

"The proud words of fools (who are) all disordered by the drink of the wine of new wealth" had been quoted to him by the old forester at Sismukkum, coming to express his horror of the man whom he had seen kick him. How little time counts for to the Indian people, when *even* their peasants console one another with the words—"Who are these? Yesterday they were not—and tomorrow their

place shall know them no more. Have patience, Brother!"

But familiar above all were the much-quoted lines "Everything is fraught with fear—Renunciation alone is fearless."

It must have been about ten o'clock the next morning when, talking on some subject, a new thought came across the Master, so that he smiled and drew up a chair to the table under the trees with the words "Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to say"—And for hours we sat there, back in the world of Dakshineshwar.

He talked of how He never made a mistake in a man's character—how He himself said "There are times when men seem to me to be made of glass, and I look them through and through." He told of the man who came drunken to Him late at night, with one bottle of brandy sticking out of a coat-pocket, and another left in the carriage behind him; of how the Old Man got up from His bed and said quietly, "Bring the other bottle"; and when both were there He danced and sang for hours with the man who had come to abuse Him. Then there was the young man whom He had touched, and who from that moment till his death, ten years later, said always, "My Beloved, My Beloved"—in sunshine and storm, well or ill.

Again was the man with whom the Lord would have nothing to do—yet everything about him seemed creditable, and all argued in his favour—and in the end his life proved hollow—a crime and a dishonour.

And there was the boy, crushed under the weight of poverty, who came again and again and sat at His feet, to whom at last He looked over and said kindly—"Go, go, and go first, and make some money—afterwards you shall come to me!" And today he is a flourishing journalist and beginning to follow very close.

"And so you see," said Swamiji, "mine is the dog's devotion—I am content to take His Word, and follow blindly."

He spoke too of Sri Ramakrishna's care about food—of how few were the hands from which He would eat. Yet how things that He would permit to no other, things that He would not take Himself, He would give His beloved disciple to eat—"He said I was the roaring fire!"

Long afterwards, the Swami told one of an unhappy lady who lived at one time in the great house in the garden, and of how her servant had brought sweetmeat to the Master. When asked from whom they came, therefore, a disciple gave her name. "Strange!" said He, putting out His foot to the mat, "Strange! for I can put my foot near them, and see! they do not burn!" For ordinarily His foot would itself refuse to touch the spot where had been an unholy contact, and the food burnt Him. So He ate the balls, and it then turned out that a devoted friend had driven in haste from Calcutta, and sent the sweets in, by the first servant he could find, and driven off!

There was that other practice, too, of examining man at all points when He first received him. Not only physically—all his past incarnations, his present, and his future, were only so many pages for His hand to turn. "When I went to the West," said the Swami, "everyone was talking of consciousness—consciousness. But the conscious seemed nothing to me—beside the sub-conscious. For I remembered how He would hypnotise a new-comer and in ten minutes know all about him."

"He had the strongest opinions, too, about the need of images. When B— had been a few days with Him, I found him and making fun of the idea he had imbibed, I made him ashamed of idolatry, and told him that Adwaitism alone was true. But when Ramakrishna Paramahamsa found this out He was deeply grieved. I also belonged to the Brahmo Samaj, you know, and was against all worship of images."

And he told us of old Gopaler-Ma,—of how she came with her stories of visions and images, and Sri Ramakrishna

sent her to "that youngman who has had an English education and taken a degree. He is a university man—you can trust his decision"—And she came, with tears, saying "O Sir, tell me if they are true or not!" And what could he say? From that moment his opposition was broken down, and he knew, as he put it to us later, that "Kalis and Shivas are not mere imagination. They are the forms that the Bhaktas have seen."

And of this gradual development from one stage of religion into another, till the last is seen to include all, the Lord had said—

"As long as you look at the earth you may make hedges, but who can hedge in the sky?"

Then he passed on to talk of God as the Mother and to quote that great folk-poet whom Ramakrishna had loved—

"Whom else shall I cry to, Mother,
The baby cries for its Mother alone.
Neither am I the son of such
That I should call any woman my Mother!
If the Mother strikes the child even,
The child cries, 'Mother, O, Mother!'
And clings still tighter to her garment."

And again—

"What's the use of going to Benares?
My mother's lotus-feet
Are millions and millions
Of holy places.

The books say that he who dies in Benares goes
to Nirvana.
I believe it. Shiva has said it.
But the root of all is Bhakti
And Mukti is her slave.

What good is in Nirvana,—
Mixing water with water?
Mind! I do not want to become sugar—
I love to eat sugar."

"You know He never spoke of Himself—only of the Divine Mother. He never said 'I' or 'Me'. He, when He realised Himself, was That!"

"O Swami!" said someone. "I do want to understand a little about Incarnations! Will you tell us?"

"Well. You see there was a feminine something somewhere, that wanted to manifest, but in some ways it was desirable to manifest as a man, and that something became Ramakrishna Paramahamsa—and that is why He always spoke of Himself as 'My Divine Mother.'

"We call such a manifestation an Ishwara—Avatara, and there always come with It a group of persons called an Ishwarkoti,* whose distinguishing mark is that they are never able to act for themselves: they are always bent on serving others. These assist in spreading the idea.

"My part? Oh, Ramakrishna always said I was the man of this Incarnation!"

"And is that why you have never seen the face of Sarada, nor She yours, even when you were young?" said Jaya.

The Master nodded. And then the spirit of mischief entered into the Lady Lakshmi and she teased him to tell us who his Guru had said he was. Of Himself the Lord had said, with unmistakable clearness that "He who came as Rama, as Krishna, as Buddha, as Jesus, as Chaitanya, dwelt here—" pointing to His own heart. What had He said of the Beloved Disciple? But on that point the Master was inexorable. He had never talked of such nonsense, he said, and dismissed the question with a frown. But Lady Lakshmi knew what she was at—and afterwards

* These are free souls, who have been great enough to hold themselves back in order to help others.

she told one who understood not, how it was believed amongst the Brotherhood that He who had spoken the Gita, and he to whom it was said had alike dwelt in the garden at Dakshineshwar, in the Persons of the Lord and Our Own Master.

But these things were not the whole of that wonderful telling. There came the story of the visit to the little room at Dakshineshwar, with his friends, and of how he was asked to sing. He chose the song of Ram Mohan Roy*—

My mind, let us go to our own home—
In the foreign country of this world, why do you
Wander without any reason?

All the sensuous objects and the five elements
They are all foreign to you, and none of them your own,
Mad thou art with love for foreigners,—
Fool!—and hast forgotten thine Own!

Go on thro' the road of Truth
Let love be the light that will light the way,
And for support keep the treasure in Secret,—Purity.

The poem acted like a signal. For the first time Sri Ramakrishna looked straight at him, and exclaiming, "My Boy, My Boy, I have been looking for you these three years past!" embraced him before them all, and took him away to be alone with Him.

It is said by others that the boy who was told that he was a divine Incarnation that day, only scoffed and thought that the Teller was mad. But he recognised in Him the most gigantic purity and sincerity that he had ever seen. And with a smile he said to his friends a week or two later that he must go back to the Old Saint, whose sweetmeats had tasted so good! Without taking the remark about

* The song in question was composed by Ajodhya Nath Pakrasi.

the sweetmeats too seriously, it is a joy to think that unconsciously The Master who was to manifest as tremendous love and fidelity as the world has ever seen, began thus voluntarily at the lowest rung of the ladder, in the merest selfishness.

And there was more of Ram Prasad . . . .

From one Bengali poet, it was easy to fall to talking of another and he translated for us bits of the works of G. C. Ghose. Only fragments come back to his hearers now—

"The flower says, rocking to and fro,
'Place me on the neck of your beloved."

"The bee in sorrow is weeping.
He could not find his sweet-heart, the flower.
In humming, humming notes he utters the
Misery of his heart,
Because he found the lake emptied of its water,
There was no lotus there!"

Or more literally—
"The sorrowful bee is weeping.
His troubled mind drives him to the lake.
And there he pours out the grief of his heart.
In humming, humming notes
For the lake is empty."

"Our friend Girish is really a genius!" said the Master. And from this, and the Bhakti of Sri Ramakrishna, he went on to talk of Chaitanya of Bengal and his friend Nityananda and to quote a whole dialogue from a play by Mr. Ghose—

Villagers:—"Who is this beggar?
Ans:— I am a beggar of love.

Villagers:—Who is distributing love in this city of Nuddea?
Ans:— I have heard the news in the heart of my heart
And that is why I am come.
I am floating down from country to country.
But here I have stuck fast in Love . . .
Strike more, Brother, but say Hari!

Villagers:—(To each other) O Madhai, who raises this war of Hari
On the banks of the Ganges?
Is it that Nitai, the Distributor of Love, has come?
Madhai say 'Hari',
We have no refuge save in these two brothers.

LECTURES AND ARTICLES

THE NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S LIFE AND WORK

Of the bodily presence of him who was known to the world as Vivekananda, all that remains today is a bowl of ashes. The light that has burned in seclusion during the last five years by our riverside, has gone out now. The great voice that rang out across the nations is hushed in death.

Life had come often to this mighty soul as storm and pain. But the end was peace. Silently, at the close of even song, on a dark night of Kali, came the benediction of death. The weary and tortured body was laid down gently and the triumphant spirit was restored to the eternal Samadhi.

He passed, when the laurels of his first achievements were yet green. He passed, when new and greater calls were ringing in his ears. Quietly, in the beautiful home of his illness, the intervening years with some few breaks, went by amongst plants and animals, unostentatiously training the disciples who gathered round him, silently ignoring the great fame that had shone upon his name. *Man-making* was his own stern brief summary of the work that was worth doing. And laboriously, unflaggingly, day after day, he set himself to man-making, playing the part of Guru, of father, even of schoolmaster, by turns. The very afternoon of the day he left us, had he not spent three hours in giving a Sanskrit lesson on the Vedas?

External success and leadership were nothing to such a man. During his years in the West, he made rich and powerful friends, who would gladly have retained him in their midst. But for him, the Occident, with all its luxu-

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ries, had no charms. To him, the garb of a beggar, the lanes of Calcutta, and the disabilities of his own people, were more dear than all the glory of the foreigner, and detaining hands had to loose their hold of one who passed ever onward toward the East.

What was it that the West heard in him, leading so many to hail and cherish his name as that of one of the great religious teachers of the world? He made no personal claim. He told no personal story. One whom he knew and trusted long had never heard that he held any position of distinction amongst his Gurubhais. He made no attempt to popularise with strangers any single form or creed, whether of God or Guru. Rather, through him the mighty torrent of Hinduism poured forth its cooling waters upon the intellectual and spiritual worlds, fresh from its secret sources in Himalayan snows. A witness to the vast religious culture of Indian homes and holy men he could never cease to be. Yet he quoted nothing but the Upanishads. He taught nothing but the Vedanta. And men trembled, for they heard the voice for the first time of the religious teacher who feared not Truth.

Do we not all know the song that tells of Shiva as he passes along the roadside, "Some say He is mad. Some say He is the Devil. Some say—don't you know?—He is the Lord Himself!" Even so India is familiar with the thought that every great personality is the meeting-place and reconciliation of opposing ideals. To his disciples, Vivekananda will ever remain the archetype of the Sannyasin. Burning renunciation was chief of all the inspirations that spoke to us through him. "Let me die a true Sannyasin as my Master did," he exclaimed once, passionately, "heedless of money, of women, and of fame! And of these the most insidious is the love of fame!" Yet the self-same destiny that filled him with this burning thirst of intense Vairagyam embodied in him also the ideal householder,—full of the yearning to protect and save, eager to learn and teach the use of materials, reaching out

towards the reorganisation and re-ordering of life. In this respect, indeed, he belonged to the race of Benedict and Bernard, of Robert de Citcaux and Loyola. It may be said that just as in Francis of Assissi, the yellow robe of the Indian Sannyasin gleams for a moment in the history of the Catholic Church, so in Vivekananda, the great saint, abbots of Western monasticism are born anew in the East.

Similarly, he was at once a sublime expression of superconscious religion and one of the greatest patriots ever born. He lived at a moment of national disintegration, and he was fearless of the new. He lived when men were abandoning their inheritance, and he was an ardent worshipper of the old. In him the national destiny fulfilled itself, that a new wave of consciousness should be inaugurated always in the leaders of the Faith. In such a man it may be that we possess the whole Veda of the future. We must remember, however, that the moment has not come for gauging the religious significance of Vivekananda. Religion is living seed, and his sowing is but over. The time of his harvest is not yet.

But death actually gives the Patriot to his country. When the master has passed away from the midst of his disciples, when the murmurs of his critics are all hushed at the burning-ghat, then the great voice that spoke of Freedom rings out unchallenged and whole nations answer as one man. Here was a mind that had had unique opportunities of observing the people of many countries intimately. East and West he had seen and been received by the high and low alike. His brilliant intellect had never failed to gauge what it saw, "America will solve the problems of the Shudra, but through what awful turmoil!" he said many times. On a second visit, however, he felt tempted to change his mind, seeing the greed of wealth and the lust of oppression in the West, and comparing these with the calm dignity and ethical stability of the old Asiatic solutions formulated by China many centuries ago. His great acumen was yoked to a marvellous humanity.

Never had we dreamt of such a gospel of hope for the Negro as that with which he rounded on an American gentleman who spoke of the African races with contempt. And when, in the Southern States he was occasionally taken for "a coloured man", and turned away from some door as such (a mistake that was always atoned for as soon as discovered by the lavish hospitality of the most responsible families of the place), he was never known to deny the imputation. "Would it not have been refusing my brother?", he said simply when he was asked the reason of this silence.

To him each race had its own greatness, and shone in the light of that central quality. There was no Europe without the Turk, no Egypt without the development of the people of the soil. England had grasped the secret of obedience with self-respect. To speak of any patriotism in the same breath with Japan's was sacrilege.

What then was the prophecy that Vivekananda left to his own people? With what national significance has he filled that Gerrua mantle that he dropped behind him in his passing? Is it for us perhaps to lift the yellow rags upon our flagpole, and carry them forward as our banner?

Assuredly. For here was a man who never dreamt of failure. Here was a man who spoke of naught but strength. Supremely free from sentimentality, supremely defiant of all authority (are not missionary slanders still ringing in our ears? Are not some of them to be accepted with fresh accessions of pride?), he refused to meet any foreigner save as the master. "The Swami's great genius lies in his dignity," said an Englishman who knew him well, "it is nothing short of royal!" He had grasped the great fact that the East must come to the West, not as a sycophant, not as a servant, but as Guru and teacher, and never did he lower the flag of his personal ascendancy. "Let Europeans lead us in Religion!" he would say, with a scorn too deep to be anything but merry. "I have never spoken of revenge," he said once. "I have always spoken

of strength. Do we dream of revenging ourselves on this drop of sea-spray? But it is a great thing to a mosquito!"

To him, nothing Indian required apology. Did anything seem, to the pseudo-refinement of the alien, barbarous or crude? Without denying, without minimising anything his colossal energy was immediately concentrated on the vindication of that particular point, and the unfortunate critic was tossed backwards and forwards on the horns of his own argument. One such instance occurred when an Englishman on boardship asked him some sneering question about the Puranas, and never can any who were present forget how he was pulverised, by a reply that made the Hindu Puranas, compare favourably with the Christian Gospels, but planted the Vedas and Upanishads high up beyond the reach of any rival. There was no friend that he would not sacrifice without mercy at such a moment in the name of national defence. Such an attitude was not, perhaps, always reasonable. It was often indeed frankly unpleasant. But it was superb in the manliness that even enemies must admire. To Vivekananda, again, everything Indian was absolutely and equally sacred,—"This land to which must come all souls wending their way Godward!" his religious consciousness tenderly phrased it. At Chicago, any Indian man attending the Great World Bazaar, rich or poor, high or low, Hindu, Mohammedan, Parsi, what not, might at any moment be brought by him to his hosts for hospitality and entertainment, and they well knew that any failure of kindness on their part to the least of these would immediately have cost them his presence.

He was himstlf the exponent of Hinduism, but finding another Indian religionist struggling with the difficulty of presenting his case, he sat down and wrote his speech for him, making a better story for his friend's faith than its own adherent could have done!

He took infinite pains to teach European disciples to eat with their fingers, and perform the ordinary simple

acts of Hindu life. "Remember, if you love India at all, you must love her *as she is,* not as you might wish her to become" he used to say. And it was this great firmness of his, standing like a rock for what actually was, that did more than any other single fact, perhaps, to open the eyes of those aliens who loved him to the beauty and strength of that ancient poem—the common life of the common Indian people. For his own part, he was too free from the desire for approbation to make a single concession to new-fangled ways. The best of every land had been offered him, but it left him still the simple Hindu of the old style, too proud of his simplicity to find any need of change. "After Ramakrishna, I follow Vidyasagar!" he exclaimed, only two days before his death, and out came the oft-repeated story of the wooden sandals coming pitter patter with the Chudder and Dhoti, into the Viceregal Council Chamber, and the surprised "But if you didn't want me, why did you ask me to come?" of the old Pundit, when they remonstrated.

Such points, however, are only interesting as personal characteristics. Of a deeper importance is the question as to the conviction that spoke through them. What was this? Whither did it tend? His whole life was a search for the common basis of Hinduism. To his sound judgment the idea that two pice postage, cheap travel, and a common language of affairs could create a national unity, was obviously childish and superficial. These things could only be made to serve old India's turn if she already possessed a deep organic unity of which they might conveniently become an expression. Was such a unity existent or not? For something like eight years he wandered about the land changing his name at every village, learning of every one he met, gaining a vision as accurate and minute as it was profound and general. It was this great quest that overshadowed him with its certainty when, at the Parliament of Religions, he stood before the West and proved that Hinduism converged upon a single imperative

of perfect freedom so completely as to be fully capable of intellectual aggression as any other faith.

It never occurred to him that his own people were in any respect less than the equals of any other nation whatsoever. Being well aware that religion was their national expression, he was also aware that the strength which they might display in that sphere, would be followed before long, by every other conceivable form of strength.

As a profound student of caste,—his conversation teemed with its unexpected particulars and paradoxes!—he found the key to Indian unity in its exclusiveness. Mohammedans were but a single caste of the nation. Christians another, Parsis another, and so on! It was true that of all these (with the partial exception of the last), non-belief in caste was a caste distinction. But then, the same was true of the Brahmo Samaj, and other modern sects of Hinduism. Behind all alike stood the great common facts of one soil; one beautiful old routine of ancestral civilisation; and the overwhelming necessities that must inevitably lead at last to common loves and common hates.

But he had learnt, not only the hopes and ideals of every sect and group of the Indian people, but their memories also. A child of the Hindu quarter of Calcutta returned to live by the Ganges-side, one would have supposed from his enthusiasm that he had been born, now in the Punjab, again in the Himalayas, at a third moment in Rajputana, or elsewhere. The songs of Guru Nanak alternated with those of Mira Bai and Tanasena on his lips. Stories of Prithvi Raj and Delhi jostled against those of Chitore and Pratap Singh, Shiva and Uma, Radha and Krishna, Sita-Ram and Buddha. Each mighty drama lived in a marvellous actuality, when he was the player. His whole heart and soul was a burning epic of the country, touched to an overflow of mystic passion by her very name.

Seated in his retreat at Belur, Vivekananda received visits and communications from all quarters. The vast

surface might be silent, but deep in the heart of India, the Swami was never forgotten. None could afford, still fewer wished, to ignore him. No hope but was spoken into his ear,—no woe but he knew it, and strove to comfort or to rouse. Thus, as always in the case of a religious leader, the India that he saw presented a spectacle strangely unlike that visible to any other eye. For he held in his hands the thread of all that was fundamental, organic, vital; he knew the secret springs of life; he understood with what word to touch the heart of millions. And he had gathered from all this knowledge a clear and certain hope.

Let others blunder as they might. To him, the country was young, the Indian vernaculars still unformed, flexible, the national energy unexploited. The India of his dreams was in the future. The new phase of consciousness initiated today through pain and suffering was to be but first step in a long evolution. To him his country's hope was in herself. Never in the alien. True, his great heart embraced the alien's need, sounding a universal promise to the world. But he never sought for help, or begged for assistance. He never leaned on any. What might be done, it was the doer's privilege to do, not the recipient's to accept. He had neither fears nor hopes from without. To reassert that which was India's essential self, and leave the great stream of the national life, strong in a fresh self-confidence and vigour, to find its own way to the ocean, this was the meaning of his Sannyasa. For his was pre-eminently the Sannyasa of the greater service. To him, India was Hinduistic, Aryan, Asiatic. Her youth might make their own experiments in modern luxury. Had they not the right? Would they not return? But the great deeps of her being were moral, austere, and spiritual. A people who could embrace death by the Ganges-side were not long to be distraced by the glamour of mere mechanical power.

Buddha had preached renunciation, and in two cen-

turies India had become an Empire. Let her but once more feel the great pulse through all her veins, and no power on earth would stand before her newly awakened energy. Only, it would be in her *own* life that she would find life, not in imitation; from her own proper past and environment that she would draw inspiration, not from the foreigner. For he who thinks himself weak *is* weak: he who believes that he is strong is already invincible. And so for his nation, as for every individual, Vivekananda had but one word, one constantly reiterated message:

"Awake! Arise! Struggle on,
And stop not till the
Goal is reached!"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AS A PATRIOT

Perhaps the distinguishing feature of the Swami's patriotism was the fact that it was centred in the country itself. Like all religious teachers in India he had a more complex and comprehensive view of what constituted the nation than could be open to any lay mind. And he hoped for nothing from the personality or the methods of the foreigners. He occasionally accepted Europeans as his disciples, but he always disciplined them to the emphatic conviction that they "must work under black men".

Before meeting his own guru, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, he may be said to have imbibed completely all that the Europeanising movement among his own people had to give. His whole life from this point becomes a progressive recapture of national ideals. He was no student of economic sociality, but his Asiatic common sense and brilliant power of insight were of themselves enough to teach him that the labour-saving mechanism of the far West,—where vast agricultural areas have to be worked single-handed—could only be introduced to the remote East,—where a tiny plot of land maintains each its man or men—at the cost of overwhelming economic disaster. He was eager indeed to see the practicability of modern science developed among his own people, but this was rather with the object of giving a new and more direct habit of thought than with any outlook on the readjustment of conditions. He probably understood as well as any university student of the West, (for scholars there are the only people who understand the actual bearing of national and economic questions! statesmen certainly do not!) that the problem of Asia today is entirely a question of the preservation of

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her old institutions at any cost, and not at all of the rapidity of innovation. He was no politician: he was the greatest of nationalists.

To him the very land was beautiful,—"The green earth, mother!" The organisation of labour through all its grades, the blossoming of ideals, the fruitage of social and spiritual powers, of thought and deed, represented a mine of wealth from which his great mind and passionate reverence could perpetually draw forth new treasures of assimilated thought for the guidance and enlightenment of cruder people. It was not the religion alone, or the philosophy alone, or the Indian Samadhi alone that spoke to the world through this great teacher. He was a perpetual witness, he was as the flood-gate of the mighty torrent, of the national genius itself. His great pugilistic energy was absorbed in the task of defence and not of aggression. He understood exhaustively all that could be urged by the opponents of caste for instance. He could say more brilliant things in its defence than anyone else living. But the one point that was clear to him when such disputes arose was the necessity of a strength that would deal with its own questions, and make or unmake its own castes old or new, at will.

It was useless to plead to him the morality of his people as a proof of their well-being. He would point out only too promptly that not one of them was so moral as any corpse! Life! let it bring order or disorder, strength, though it might entail turmoil and sorrow,—these, and not petty reforms were the goal of his patriotism. But it must be the nation's own life, proper to her own background. India must find herself in Asia, not in a shoddy Europe "made in Germany"! The future would not be like the past, yet it could be only firmly established in a profound and living reverence for that past.

This was why the Swami aimed so persistently, so pertinaciously at discovering the essentials of the national consciousness. This was why no smallest anecdote, no

trifling detail of person or of custom, ever came amiss to his intellectual net. This was the meaning of his great search for the common bases of Hinduism. Let a still greater future be built upon the mighty past. Let every man be Bhishma or Yudhisthira and the Mahabharata lives again. His great cry—"We are under a Hypnotism! We think we are weak and this makes us weak! Let us think ourselves strong and we are invincible," had a national as well as a spiritual meaning. He never dreamt of failure for his people, any more than he tolerated the superficial criticisms of exuberant fools. To him India was young in all her parts. To him the ancient civilisation meant the inbreeding of energy through many a millennium. To him the destiny of the people was in their own soil, and the destiny of the soil was no less in its own people.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

When I come before you this evening to talk to you about Swami Vivekananda you will remember that I come to speak as his disciple and his daughter. It is impossible for me to give you the calm, cold and critical account of my great master that you would expect from a historian or a journalist. I have come to offer you my own sincere and faithful experiences. Stories have been told of his early childhood, of his wandering dreams, his devotion to Shiva, his being locked up by his mother on account of his strange divine notions, and his University education. His Sanskrit learning led him to abandon loyally and beneficially all the superstitious notions and to stand face to face with realities. His devotion to truth became unassailable. With his marvellous intellectual endowments he stood equipped, at the age of fifteen, with a considerable degree of enthusiasm, education and development of the heart and mind, and at that age he began to wander in the woods and jungles to search for the great Hanuman to find out truth. Time after time he returned disconsolate, for no Hanuman was there. Then there came a day when, while he was rambling in the garden of the great Temple on the banks of a river he met one, who answered his question "Have you seen God?" by saying "Yes, my child. I have seen God and I will teach you how to see Him". That person was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. I don't know, if you, in Bombay, are deeply acquainted with his life. He was, if I may so put it, the heart and soul of my own Guru, Swami Vivekananda. He was born some sixty years ago, and about forty years ago, that is, towards the beginning of the present era, he came to establish himself as a priest in the Temple of Kali. His ideal of Mukti is

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to be found in the Upanishads and in the Vedas. His theory of Mukti is contained in the writings of the Bhagavad Gitæ. He wandered through the Mahommedan graveyards, slept there, called aloud the name of Allah—ate Mahommedan food and his opinion was that a Mussalman was absolutely as accessible to the divine grace as any child of the Aryan race. Similarly he laid himself at the foot of Christ, turned an Indian Christian, identified himself with all the possible external details of Christian life, and was convinced that Christ himself was indeed a way to truth and light as much as Mother Kali. It was to this man that my Guru came at the age of eighteen, then full of windy talk in English about Idolatry, about the necessity of breaking the Zenana system and about the despicable character of Indian civilization, but his association with Sri Ramakrishna helped him in his realization of truth and enabled him to fight the intellectual battles of different nations. Wandering from place to place he came to the West and on its own ground invaded its religious consciousness as a master and conqueror. Some of us have learnt to believe that these two souls were indeed one great soul manifested into two souls for regenerating and rejuvenating Indian life.

It would be impossible for me to give you the slightest perception of the unity of your Eastern life. Eastern life gives to me my fullest consciousness. I regret so deeply that I was born in another country. So far as my own perception of the unity of the Eastern life is concerned, India is not deficient in any way in the power of tremendous unity; she is not in any way inferior to any people whatsoever of this earth; she is the greatest of the great in this world. She has double the power of other nations and practises it only on the very highest plane for the good and not for the evil of the other nations. I ask you, how much would Swami Vivekananda have been able to accomplish even with his mighty and overwhelming genius, had it not been for the twelve or fifteen men whom he had

behind him? How much would have possibly been done, had it not been for the steady co-operation of the men behind him? It is a wondrous thing, this unique Indian consciousness! These two Sannyasis dedicated their whole lives to the service of the whole world—to the redemption of the whole world.

The education of Swami Vivekananda may be divided into different stages comprising the amassing of the instrument of research and the study of English and Sanskrit at the University. His study of Sanskrit supplied him with the key of the Shastras. That key came into the hands of the man, who had himself sounded the depth of salvation. It was, however, after his meeting Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa that the Swami went out across the country and lived now with a scavenger and now with a Brahmin; and now with a Shaiva and now with a Vaishnava and it was only then that he completed his own great realization. It was for this reason, I take it, that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa once for all put his personal unconscious life in Swami Vivekananda, and that Swami Vivekananda, once for all, by direct and thunder-like touch, perceived that *strength*. Strength is religion and not Salvation alone. You will remember that the Swami himself after his return to Madras in the year 1897 declared that the word "Vedanta" must be given a wider meaning. We have been a little faltering and a little thin in our conception of the word "Vedanta" when we take it to mean only a formulated philosophy. It could never have that meaning at all. Do you imagine that the great Shankaracharya understood that word in that sense? In one sense "Vedanta" was nothing but an expression of national life including a thousand different forms of religion, because it expresses the attitude of each one of those religions to the other. And what is that attitude? That none of these faiths is destructive to another. Vedanta philosophy is full of religious genius and is like a kindergarten class for religious education. The great ideas of Brahmacharya and Sannyasa are now being

realised in England and America. The Swami in the strength of his own personal character and his own personality impressed upon us the deep meaning of Hinduism, and it struck us as the solution of the whole difficulty of our idea of true religion—it was the superconsciousness of life itself. That was the doctrine which he held up to be his own on the basis of the Hindu religion. But we have reached this great formula and also the great conception of life itself with the authority, not of a single personality, not with the authority of a single Guru, but in the life and literature of persons who lived three thousand years ago.

The Swami has done great work in the West. He has also done that work by moving among different nations, regardless of colour, race, creed, history or traditions. He did that work in the midst of their suffering, in the midst of their belief and in the midst of their happiness, going here and going there, regardless of whether death would find him on the snows of the Himalayas or in some Western places frozen, or starved, or what not. He took it that consciousness of life was a nucleus of national unity. I think that there is no economic problem of more consequence in this country, that there is no social problem of any greater consequence to this country and that there is no educational problem of more consequence to this country than that great problem, namely, "How India should remain India?" That is a great problem. The answer is, "by means of the national consciousness." I do not say "national existence," for national consciousness remains intact; it does not die. I ask you to adopt his principles, and be true to yourselves because truth is a mighty treasure that you hold and you hold it not for your own benefit but for the benefit of the world, of the suffering humanity.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION

As far back as 1877, one afternoon, there went to the garden of Dakshineshwar a company of college boys to pay a visit to the sacred temple of the Holy Mother where they saw an old Sadhu in the midst of a group of Brahmins, friends and hangers-on and a lot of other people. The Sadhu was sitting in a little room of the temple when there entered this company of college boys. The Sadhu happened to turn to one amongst them, one who had nothing then to distinguish him from the rest of the company. He asked the young collegian to sing, and as the little room echoed with the song of Ram Mohan Roy* sung by the youth the old Sadhu looked upon him with a look of recognition and between them passed a signal of exchange. The song was over and the old Sadhu bent forward and embraced the youth exclaiming, "Ah! Why did you not come before? I have been searching for thee these three years." Then began the six years' struggle between the Sadhu and his young disciple. The struggle ended, ended by the capture of the Guru by the disciple, the capture of brother-disciples. And strong personality was infused into the young collegian by the teacher and then out went to the world the modern St. Paul of the national movement.

The youth educated on Western lines at an Indian University, had that Indian power of thought with Western hold of scientific learning; had that doubt and scepticism which characterises the modern youth, but with a passionate hunger for truth. He had very little belief in old ways and methods and customs which he used to refer to in the ironical and sarcastic ways of his age. This youth came in later life to be known as Swami Vivekananda. In his

Lecture delivered on Sunday, the 24th January, 1904, in Patna.
* The song in question was composed by Ajodhya Nath Pakrasi.

childhood he used to go from sage to sage with his question—"Have you seen God?" Once, it is said, he saw Maharshi Devendranath going in a boat on the Ganges. The boy at once swam and climbed up the boat and stood before the Maharshi. Then out came the usual question. But the Maharshi could not but reply in the negative. The boy went from teacher to teacher with the self-same question only to return home broken-hearted at the answer he received. In his babyhood he was asked to look for Hanuman in the Ramayana. He went, opened the book, scanned it but in vain did he search for him. He had from his boyhood that passion for truth that was for him no mean worship in a foreign country. The soul of the Sadhu spoke with the soul of the boy and the Guru impressed on the boy those blazing points of his. The favourite question "have you seen God" was put to the Sadhu, who with immeasurable love replied that he had, and that the lad would see Him too. All saw the lad pass into utmost Samadhi, a human cry escaped his lips as he woke up as if at a separation unwished for. But the Sadhu said, "the mercy that is refused thee now will be thine. Weep, weep and weep thy heart out."

Such was the meeting between this young collegian with his scepticism and doubt and this ignorant Fakeer, this worshipper of Kali,—of that image neither of wood nor stone nor painted with grim colours, but that image, horrible, aboriginal, too cruel against which the revolt of the pure side of the twentieth century would crush—that image of Kali, the image with which are blended the associations of early orthodoxy. Before that horrible image stood the lad till horror grew full upon the lad and he could not stand the idea. But then the truth in the man drew the lad nearer and such love did the lad cherish for his Guru that he left home and adoring friends and guided by a strange element he came to serve him with all the ideas of an old Hindu student for his Guru. For the Sadhu he had only an anxious attitude of reverence and worship.

Patience and hardship were the accompaniments of the boy. But the fond love and adoration for the Guru made the boy great; provided him with a band of brothers, a band of devoted friends; supplied him with that courage which made him not to shrink from eating with Mlechhas; filled him with that Bhakti and discipline which stood him in good stead in afterlife. Such was the influence of that Guru that when time came, the world saw a level of brotherhood and friendship—not of a mean order—rise in response to the call of their brother to proclaim to the world the mission preached by the life of one whom the world reveres.

It is inexplicable to us that the God of the Universe, who sends down the rivers that roll down seawards, sends down a band of companions and fellow-workers when time comes to follow up the work of a noble soul. How beautiful, how noble, how elevating is the picture of the disciple sitting at the feet of his Guru, year after year, absorbing the power of the Master, strange and inexplicable in itself, and appreciating the communicative nature of his Guru,—communicative of the horrible secret of which he possessed. The experiences of his Guru conquered the lad and that sceptic of a youth believed in the power of the dread Mother,—a youth with hopes, anxiety and fears produced on the mind by the Western education. The youth imbibed the strength of the Guru and came out possessed of the blessings of India's past in all completeness. The Guru saw visions but the disciple believed not in them and thought that his Guru was old and brainsick and the visions were so many productions of his weak brain. At last the youth came to realise that the visions were no brainsick adulations of an old Sadhu but were truths—truths sent down to his Guru by the dread Mother. So great a master did the youth become that one afternoon came an old woman with her stories of visions which she saw. The old Sadhu referred the woman to the boy. She recounted them to him and then the youth told her that

her visions were truth and nothing but the truth. The Guru's power was inexplicably great; he made single actors play dramas; his touch made people saints; his sweet words were as Ganges water to the troubled and sinful hearts. He was a strange mixture of superstitions and the wonderful insight into truth. And who was this Guru? He was Ramakrishna Paramahamsa—a priest of Kali in a temple built by a lady—a priest too orthodox in his views, eating the Prasad of the Goddess and performing the Puja. But when the Goddess sent down her blessings he abandoned his family and friends, and, seized with truth and visions that he saw, he would lapse into Samadhi. His soul was set on God and the grim Mother and reached that place which was behind all forms of prayers—which no image reached till in his last Samadhi he reached the unattainable and uttermost peace and passed on to a place beyond all understanding.

Out went the disciple with the mission of his Guru on an eight years' wandering in India and foreign lands, avoiding publicity and seeking rest and meditation till at last one finds him a yellow-clad beggar in America in that memorable assembly, the Parliament of Religions. There for the first time the mission of his Guru was voiced forth before an assembly which knew very very little about the religion of the Hindus.. It was the mission of India, of her people and of the ideas of her people. In one of the diaries written by one who was present there, we find what struck the writer most in that "orgie of religious dissipation was the strange man's passion for his own people." His speech was one about Hindu belief and whatever he said and taught was Hindu, essentially Hindu. To proclaim to the world the mission of his teacher he had three things within him which fitted him for the work. He was educated on English lines at an Indian University. He had the complete ability of studying facts and things from the modern standpoint. He had the knowledge of Sanskrit. To all these were added the vision of the Guru, and his

knowledge of India as a whole. He was sent to teach what was true in a religion, true for the East as well as for the West, and to explode the miserable sophistry about religion.

For the last time at the Paris University in 1900 he spoke out to the West the mission of his teacher. The interpretations of his religion which he gave there were accepted by the highest in the English and American worlds as some of the highest culture. His work glorified that humble life in the garden of Dakshineshwar and restored to Asia her leadership in the sphere of thought. Europe could very easily grasp the doctrine of evolution and other scientific dogmas but all religious activity is the ground of Asiatic intellect.

His mission to you, his own countrymen, is what you have the strength to make it. His mission depends upon your activity, faith and understanding and above all on courage. Fail not in courage. May the blessing of the great Mother be upon you; may you be drunk with strength and energy to unite together in bonds of brotherhood, bonds stronger than iron ones.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MISSION TO THE WEST

Nothing is more difficult to disentangle than the history of a definite religious idea. Even things apparently so historically originated, as the annual religious mourning of the Christians and Mahommedans may possibly be traceable to the yearly weeping of the Phoenician by the banks of the Adonis, over the waters, reddened by the blood of the slain God. Yet a few facts stand out more or less plainly. Religious ideas spring up spontaneously as does language in geographical areas. Vaguely they seem to be more or less associated with religion and with race. The Jamuna, for instance, appears to be the home of a great nexus of ideals, centering in Brindavan, and the Ganges of another belonging to the North. The political and ethnological movements of history are the occasions of union for such systems. They meet and unite, perhaps to cleave again in different directions, along other lines, like fields of Polar ice. In this way the outstanding religions of the world today have come into being, and most interesting to notice is Christianity, the faith of the West, the result of that particular consolidation of nations, Eastern and Western, which is known as the Roman Empire. But these meetings of races and mythologies always have the effect of destroying a people's faith in the historic credibility of their local mythology, and this shock Christendom, at least Protestant Christendom, has recently undergone. It is impossible to hold the old faith in the literal accuracy of the story of Bethlehem of India, when we learn for the first time the details of the older tales of Mathura. Moreover, the birth of modern science has confronted the intellect of Europe with the problems of duality. It has

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Lecture delivered on Sunday, the 5th February 1905, at the Belur Math, Howrah.

become clear that Europe is living under the shadow of Semetic conceptions of Good and Evil, not because she has chosen to do so, but because she has not yet been able to shake herself free of them. Such are the religious conditions consequent on the modern discovery of the world as a whole. Such became the state of thought in the West as soon as the inclusion of India in the circle of English-speaking countries brought the Aryan intellect within the sphere of purely Aryan thought. It was under these conditions that Swami Vivekananda made his historic pronouncement in the West with regard to the religious ideas of the East. Like the young Buddha making pilgrimage to Nalanda, there to test the strength and vigour of the teaching of his own Guru Kapila, Vivekananda went out in the might of a great life, that of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. But that life had been amplified and deepened in time by his wanderings over the whole of India. It was "the religious ideas of the Hindus" of which he stood before the culture of the West to speak. Through him more than 200 millions of men became eloquent. A whole nation, a whole evolution, stood on their trial. And out of the work done by him during four years in the West, two ideas emerge into special clearness as dominating factors in the future evolution of a consolidated religion, pronounced by him for the first time with authority. One is that favourite saying, in which he constantly sums up the life of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. To a world which has learnt to deny that any religion is true in the sense in which it is accepted, he well affirms that in a higher and truer sense, all religions are true. "Man proceeds from truth to truth, and not from error to truth." And the other is the doctrine of unity, the doctrine that culminates in the Adwaita Philosophy, "one behind Good and Evil, one behind pleasure and pain, one behind form and formless. Thou art He! Thou art He! O my soul!"

We must not shrink from the claim that here spoke a world-voice. What we have to learn in this matter is to

think greatly enough of our time, greatly enough of the presence under which we are gathered together today, in the era of the discovery by the human consciousness of the world as a whole, we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears, one whose voice with the centuries will become only more and more potent, one who shall avail to bring clearness and light, to bring unnumbered souls, one for the touch of whose feet many now unborn, in countries we have never seen, shall yearn unspeakably and yearn in vain.

KEDAR NATH AND BADRI NARAYAN : A PILGRIM'S DIARY

KEDAR NATH AND BADRI NARAYAN: A PILGRIM'S DIARY

Place	Distance	Remarks on Accommodation
Hardwar Satya Narain 7 miles	0	
Hrishikesh Lakshman Jhula 3 miles Phool Chatty 5 miles	12 miles	Dharmshalas; an inspection bungalow.
Mohun Chatty Dakbungalow Bijni 3 miles Bandar Chatty 6 miles	14 miles	Dharmshalas and chappars.
Mahadeo Chatty Kandi 6 miles	12 miles	Dharmshala and chappars.
Vyasaganga	10 miles	Dharmshala long disused; chappars.
Devaprayag Dak Bungalow Kolta key Ranibagh	9 miles	Dharmshala. A small city and bazar.
Rampur	10 miles	Temporary accommodation.
Bilwakedar	5 miles	Temporary accommodation.
Shrinagar	3 miles	A City. Dharmshalas and Dak bungalow.

"Imagine!" said one of our party suddenly, as we sat at a meal somewhere on the road between Kedar Nath and

Badri Narayan, "Imagine! we are only ten or twelve days from Manasa Sarovara, and the people call all this country Kailas! *We are in Kailas!*" We were indeed. And to add to that fact we had entered the land of promise by the old historic road. Beginning with Hardwar,—that miniature and unspeakably beautiful Benares—and passing through Hrishikesh, we had ascended step by step, march by march, from one holy place to another, side by side with pilgrims from every province in India, till we had reached the crown of them all at Kedar Nath ; and were now on the way to Badri Narayan, thence to return to ordinary life and work, in our homes in the plains. It was a wonderful word, this that we were in Kailas, and we all sat for a moment, pondering on its meaning. Amongst the pines and deodars, with mountain-flowers underfoot, and hoary places of pilgrimage behind and before, it was not incredible. But we needed to drink deep for a while of the thought, that we might realise the Invisible Presence inhabiting and consecrating the holy home.

It is very characteristic, that while Hinduism lays great emphasis on the sacredness of the northern pilgrimage, it is yet difficult to obtain any authentic information about its details, before one starts. For this reason it seems almost obligatory upon those who perform it, that they should, if possible, publish their experiences, for the guidance of others, who are eager to undertake it. At present, there is very little that the intending traveller can make sure of, either as regards time, distances, or the accommodation available. And few things are more necessary than the frank publication of the actual diary of some pilgrim, to which all the would-be adventurous may obtain easy access. The setting-forth need not afterwards be that plunge in the dark which it is at present. A man may then calculate freely the time and means at his disposal, and make such provision as is possible to him, for the difficulties and perhaps the dangers of his undertaking.

The one piece of advice that one would like to give

all intending travellers is the importance of securing a good Panda—as the semi-ecclesiastical courier is called—at the beginning of the journey. We were lucky enough to fall in with Gopal Panda of Kedar Nath, when we were at *Hardwar,* and to take him with us, and no words can tell of his value. He was full of energy and resource. He saw us through every difficulty, and his social influence smoothed over many delicate matters, probably. A Panda should not be too scholarly, as in that case he is sure to be defective in energy ; yet his fund of local information is a great sweetener of the road.

The first impression gleaned from the pilgrimage as a whole is a deepened sense of Indian unity. And this is created in us, not only by the crowds of wayfarers—from the Punjab, Maharashtra, Madras, Malabar, the North-West Provinces, and Bengal—whom we meet or pass, hour after hour. It is also due to the fact that here on this northern pilgrimage, the great Pujari-Brahmins and Mahunts are all Deccanis. Even the Pandas, on the Badri Narayan road, are south-country men. In the case of Kedar, however, the Panda, whatever their historical origin, are now firmly established in the locality, and our own guide, philosopher and friend was a man who belonged to the village of Ben Asur. The Mahunts, or as they are called, Raouls, of Kedar Nath, Badri Narayan, and other sacred places, are bound to nominate their disciples from the south only. And thus is kept alive the tradition of those spiritual impulses which within the last thousand years have come always from the farthest end of India. First Magadha and then Dravida-desha has originated the waves that have transformed the Himalayas ; but in either case the fact is equally conspicuous, that the Motherland is indeed one, that north and south are inextricably knit together, and that no story of its analysed fragments, racial, lingual, or political, could ever be the story of India. There must be recognition of a synthesis, to do justice to that tale. For the Indian peoples have in the past known how to shape

themselves as a unity, definite and coherent, and behind them stands ever the Motherland, one from end to end.

To Indians themselves, if they have never before been on pilgrimage, the life of the pilgrim-roads is likely to be a revelation. Who uttered a doubt that India had a place and a life for women? Certainly none who had ever seen a pilgrimage. Marching along we meet them, singly or in couples, or may be in long strings of tens and twenties, old and young mingled together. There is neither fear, nor exaggerated shyness in their demeanour. Sometimes one will be separated by a few yards from the party, telling her beads, or lost in solitary thought. Sometimes again we meet an old woman who seems to belong to none. But almost everyone is cheerful, and almost all, from the custom of wearing their jewels all the time, have an air of festivity and brightness. All pilgrims know one another. Here, none of the stiffness of a meaner world prevails. We all speak to one another as we pass. 'Jai! Kedar Nath Swami ki Jai!' or 'Jai! Badri Bissal lal ki Jai!' we say to each whom we meet, whether man or woman. And no words can describe the flash of sweetness and brightness that lights up the reply. We are all out on a holiday together, and an air of gentle innocence and hilarity prevails, in face of difficulties, and creates a sort of freemasonry amongst all who seek the common goal. One has the chance here of studying the refinement of eastern salutations. Sometimes a wayfarer passes, who is telling her beads, or who, for some reasons or another does not care to break her silence, but oh, the dignity and charm of the bow that answers the pilgrim's salutation in such a case! Even here, in an environment which is in some ways one of intensified practicality, we meet now and again with the inveterate dreamer, living in that world upon whose shores no wave can break. It was turning into the wedge-shaped ravine of Garura Ganga that we came upon one such. She was a little old woman, and we caught her just as she had stepped out of her prim little shoes, placed neatly behind

her, and with rapt look prostrated herself. Two people who were coming forward, drew back at this, that she might not know herself interrupted, and then as again we stepped forward and came face to face with her, we saw that for the moment she was lost in the world of her own reverence. In her eyes was the look of one who saw not the earth. It was a sudden glimpse of the snow mountains to which she had paid involuntary homage.

Climbing over some peculiarly difficult boulders in the dry bed of a torrent, we met two old women, both almost blind, and bent half-double with age and infirmity. They were coming back from Badri Narayan. The place was terrible, and as we came up to them one of them stumbled. But to an ejaculation of concern, they replied, between themselves, with an air of triumph in their gaiety, "What! Is not Narayan leading? And since He has given Darshana, what does this matter?"

Happy they whose pilgrimage can begin at Hardwar! Never surely was there a place so beautiful. It is like Benares on a very small scale. But as one of our party remarked, people go to Benares to die, and to Hardwar as the beginning of a high undertaking. This of itself confers on the town an air of brightness. In the moonlight nights the Jatris set out with their Pandas, singing, as they go, along the roads. And oh, the evening worship of the Ganges? In the very middle of the lowest step of the semicircular ghats of the Brahma Kund a priest stands waving what looks like a small brass tree of flame. Behind him crowd the worshippers, chiefly women, and on the bridge and island that stretch across the little bay in front of his, forming the chord of the semi-circle, stand and sit other worshippers, obviously, to judge by differences of dress and type, travellers from many and various provinces. All is rapt silence, while the public worship is proceeding, but as it ends, the whole multitude breaks out into chanting. Choir upon choir, they sing the glories of the Ganges, answering each other in the manner of an antiphon. And

away beyond them stretch green islands and wooded heights, about which the blue veil of the evening mists has just begun to fall. The very scene, in itself is the perfection of praise. "Oh ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord! Praise Him and magnify Him for ever! Oh ye rivers and streams, bless ye the Lord! Praise Him and magnify Him for ever!"

It is the railway, we are told, that has popularised Hardwar. Until a few years ago, Kankhal had been long the recognised centre and people made pilgrimage only to Hardwar, for bathing and praying being exceedingly careful to be back before nightfall, so probable was the appearance of a tiger on the road between the two places. But the fact that the habit of pilgrimage could persist at all under such circumstances, is eloquent testimony to the age of the place. Kankhal itself, a couple of miles away, is the seat of Shiva as Daksheshwar, and therefore, we cannot doubt, one of the most ancient sites of Hinduism. Here we are shown the very place where Sati fell, and that where Daksha offered sacrifice. Suddenly a whole chapter of pre-Hindu Hinduism—perhaps ages long—becomes visible to us. We see that there was a time when people were familiar with the image of the Goat-headed Lord of Creation. We remember the Great God Pan of the Greeks, with his one goat-foot. And we do not wonder that there should have been a struggle between this old nature-god Daksha, who may have been a personification of the Polar Star, and the new Shiva, Lord of the consciences of men.

Hrishikesh, twelve miles away from Hardwar, is a university of an ancient type. Here, amongst some of the most beautiful scenery of the Himalayas, just at the rapids of the Ganges, are hundreds of straw huts in which live Sadhus. Amongst these, it is doubtless possible to realise the ideal of the Vedic Ashramas, in a life of simplicity, order, and learning. The first duty of the new arrival is, as I have heard, to build his own hut. Within these, men live alone or in couples, according to the merciful custom

that usually carries the begging friars forth, not alone, but by twos. But when evening comes, at any rate in the winter, the great meditation-fires are lighted here and there, in the open air, and seated round them the monks discourse 'of settled things.' Then they relapse by degrees into the depths of thought, and when darkness has fallen and all is quiet, one after another each man slips quietly away to his own hut. It is an extraordinary combination of freedom and society, of the ideals of the hermitage and of the monastery. It may be that it gives us a glimpse of the monastic conditions of the Thebaid, but in modern times it could certainly be paralleled nowhere outside India. The Sadabratas in the little town close by are another institution that correspond to nothing in foreign countries. Here the Sadhus daily receive their rations of food, some cooked and some uncooked. For it is a mistake to think that those who have taken up the life of the Sannyasin can study and think, without a certain amount of bodily nourishment. Our selfishness may make us eager to preach such an ideal, but it will always be for others to realise! At the same time the Sadabratas relieve the monks of the dishonour of becoming beggars, and the community of the scandal of a disorderly burden. These, in their present high organisation and development, owe a great deal to the life and work of Kamliwâlâ Bâbâ, one of the national heroes whose name is known too little, outside monastic ranks. By his labours, the Northern Pilgrimage has been rendered available, for the thousands of pilgrims who now pass along it, and it is to be hoped that in the movement now going on for the recovery of biographies, his will not be forgotten. The present road from Hardwar to Hrishikesh, with its new temple and bazaar of Satya Narayan, is of Kamliwâlâ Bâbâ's making, as are all the good Dharmshalas along the road. The old way to Hrishikesh lay along the Ganges-bank. In the desert-like country about Hrishikesh, one of the characteristic charities is the little water-and-mat stations, where

a Gerua-Turbaned servant lives in a little hut, serving out water to each passer-by who asks for it, and keeping a clean space swept and cowdunged where anyone can lie down a mat in the shade of a tree.

How old is Hrishikesh? In its very nature it is impermanent. The materials of which it is built this winter will not remain after next summer's rains. And how long the site has been used in this way who shall say? May be the history of Hardwar would give us some clue to this. May be the Kumbha Mela would help us to calculate its age. The very fleetingness of its buildings must have lengthened its days, for political convulsions that would sweep clean the Caves of Ajanta or Ellora, would leave this winter-resort of the learned and pious entirely unaffected. As the waters of a lake close over a stone, so would Hrishikesh recover from catastrophe and grow out of its very memory. And the tradition goes, we must remember, that one of the earliest literary undertakings of our people—the division of the Vedas by Vyasa, into four—was carried out in this place.

About a mile or less below the Bridge of Lakshman Jhula, four miles further on, is the official weighing station where loads and prices are authoritatively apportioned. Rates have been raised lately, but it is a great satisfaction to have a definite scale of charges and a reasonable contract on both sides. This once concluded, the coolies let us see that they are overjoyed to start on the journey, and consider themselves as much pilgrims as we! Lakshman Jhula has a temple beside it, and a ghat known as Dhruva's. A sudden depth in the water here is known as the Pandavas' Pool. We are now in the Gorge of the Ganges, and continue so for some four miles longer. At the end of this. with its beautiful scenery, is Phoolbari, or Phool Chatty. Five miles after, along a narrower stream, we come to Mohun Chatty, in a wide valley. Here only accommodation consists of a Dharmshala and mat-covered Chhappars or huts. The Dharmshala with its metal roof is exceedingly hot. It contains a few small mud-walled and

mud-floored rooms with a large common verandah outside. Such provisions as are obtainable, along with vessels for cooking, are to be had from the local shopkeeper. Here then we settle down for the day and night. What a pity for the extreme artificiality that makes it impossible for us to rest in public, like the simple folk who go and come around us! Yet so it is. Were we at home, we should even require doubtless to have seclusion from each other. Here, however, we are thankful enough for the white sheet and baggage that enable us to be a family, apart from other families. Within our screened room we sit and try to keep as cool as may be. But, to one at least, comes again and again the thought that she is in just such an inn as that to which at Bethlehem in Judæa once came two wayfarers and found "no room." All about us outside are the open-air cooking fires and the reed-roofed shelters of such as have found no place in this grander Dharmshala. Suppose anyone tonight should come too late, and finding 'no room,' be turned away?

We were awakened by the Pandas at Mohun Chatty at about two in the morning. All round us in the darkness we could hear women urging their companions to be up and off. And as each little party made ready to start, we could see it stand and beat time till the Panda gave the word "Jai Kedar Nath Swami ki Jay!" or something of the sort, and then on the instant, cheerily footing it off, gentlefolk, coolies, and all. As we swung along the roads in the darkness, we had to take some care where we set our foot. For up here on the hillside numbers of pilgrims had lain down to rest, apparently, wherever they had found themselves when they grew tired. Here they lay sleeping, stretched across the pathway, their heads lifted on their little bundles, asking no better roof than the starry sky above. Oh, to reach the simplicity of such an outlook upon life!

Three miles beyond Mohun Chatty, after continuous climbing, we come upon the little dak bungalow of Bijni,

of which the key is kept in the bazaar, half a mile further. Another five miles brings us, with a sharp descent, to Bandar Chatty, where the logs are piled up. Four miles further still, making altogether thirty-eight from Hardwar, is Mahadeo Chatty.

This is nothing but a pilgrim's centre. Again we are in a Dharmshala. Only it must be said that here there are two, one across the river of stones on our right hand side. We stand a little apart from the village, too, with its multitude of Chatties. But this advantage is less real than imaginary, for later on, when the rest of the pilgrims arrive, they camp about us here, and the resources of the place are taxed to their utmost. The river on our left, as we came along the road today, was beautiful with dark crags and snow-white sands. Here in the midst of its rushing coolness with the burning sun overhead, one understands for the first time, the physical rapture of the religious bathing of Hinduism. We find the same to be true again at the little village of Vyasa Ganga. Here the different mountain ranges seem all to recede from one another simultaneously, and leave a great open circle, through which the main current of the Ganges sweeps immense curves, with vast sandy beaches on either hand; and then before leaving this natural theatre, it turns to receive, on its left hand side, the swift clear torrent of the Vyasa Ganga, with its black transparent water mingling in the milky-brown of the larger stream. At the junction of the Vyasa Ganga the road from Lansdowne enters the place. Here the little mat-covered huts, so like old Italian pictures, were peculiarly beautiful, and the grander accommodation of a Pucca building peculiarly bad. So, after breakfast, we all adjourned from our dirty iron-roofed upper storey,—which had not been cowdunged since the day of its birth apparently!—to one of the neat empty Chappars. Here there was a slight breeze, and by means of wet sheets and towels, it was not impossible to keep off the sun.

An imaginary line separates the floor of one family or

party in such structures from that of the next. And we could feel ourselves real pilgrims, as we rested, with our books, and listened to the gentle conversation, or the reading of the Kedar Khanda, all about us. At half past three, no one could have told by the senses alone that there was any change in the light. The fierce blaze continued just as before. Yet at that moment exactly an old woman, not far off, rose, girded herself for the road, took up her staff, and, followed by two daughters-in-law, in red saris and bodices, with bundles on their heads, set forth into sun and heat. What determination, what austerity spoke in her grim old face! Thousands of years of character were in that simple act. Then the afternoon march began, for others, also; and an hour or two later the pilgrims who would camp here for the night came up, and all the distant places of the shore became bright with cooking-fires. On the mountains, too, the night made visible the forest-fires, and over all poured down the moonlight, throwing the wooded hills into strong shadow against the silver blueness of the river, and the snow-whiteness of the sands.

Our men were very anxious to reach DEVA PRAYAG. It was the home of some of them, and it was in any case in their beloved Tehri territory. For the river at this part of the route had been agreed upon as the boundary between Tehri and British India. A ten miles' march was nothing to them, when their enthusiasm was awakened, and we reached our destination next day quite early. It was interesting, as we set out on the road from Vyasa Ganga, to note, ere it left the open valley and turned in between the hills, the small temple of Vyasa standing on the river-bank. Here in the days when the characteristic culture of the epoch lay in a knowledge of the Mahabharata, and when the effort of all this region was to appropriate the scenes and incidents of the great work, here it was possible for the pious pilgrim to make salutation at the feet of master-poet before entering on the sacred way. Up to this time the only mention of the Pandavas that we had come

upon had been the name of a bathing pool at Lakshman Jhula. But this was easily accounted for. There would be an ever-present tendency to create such associations, acting throughout modern times. From the moment of passing Vyasa Ganga, however, we were in Mahabharata country, and this little chapel of the prince of poets, proved that it was the Mahabharata as a poem, that we were following, not a tissue of pre-literary and pre-historic Pandava traditions.

The ten miles to Deva Prayag lay through beautiful scenery, but along narrow thread-like paths running above high precipices. The men burst into shouts of joy at the sight of the place, but we had been so spoilt by the open expanded beauty of the other places we had seen, that we were much disappointed to find it dark, crowded on the steep points of sharply sloping hills brought together by the junction of two rapid and powerful streams, and huddled and grim in style. The houses seemed all to stand on tip-toe behind each other, to see the river. In the evening, however, when we walked in the bazaar, seeing the homes of the people from the other side, we caught many a glimpse of an interior, ending in a verandah that seemed to be suspended in mid-air over the waters, and then we understood the idea of Deva Prayag, that it was not built, like Benares, for splendour of approach, but rather for actual enjoyment of its wonderful river. Hence the beauty of the place is all within. And certainly no race with sense open to the awful, could have refrained from buliding a city at Deva Prayag. I have missed many chances of seeing Niagara, but I cannot imagine that it is any grander than the sight of the gorge as one stands on the bridge at Deva Prayag. Nor can I conceive of anything more terrible than the swirl and roar of the rivers here, where the steps lead down over the living rock to the meeting of the Alakananda and Bhagirathi. Wind and whirlpool and torrent overwhelm us with their fierceness of voice and movement. The waters roar, and a perpetual tempest wails and rages.

And as long as a thing is too much for one's mind to grasp, does it matter whether it is once or fifty times too much? Infinite is the terror of the waters at Deva Prayag. Victory to the Infinite! Glory to the Terrible!

The point of land at the confluence, is a rock about two hundred and fifty feet high. On the top is a temple with a very large enclosure containing many shrines and sacred objects. How ancient is the site one trembles to think, for the Prayag is dedicated to Shiva, by a hundred unmistakable signs, and the temple is of Ramachandra! This identity of Rama with Mahadeva was a matter that held the thoughts of Hindu folk a very long time ago. To judge by it, the dedication might be sixteen, or seventeen, or more, hundreds of years old. That the continuity of the site as a holy place has been maintained, is seen, moreover, when one finds a little Shiva-chapel under this main mound, containing images of Ganges and of Devi, and one emblem of Shiva of the sixth to seventh century type. There is a tradition that Shankaracharya visited Deva Prayag. Well may he have done so. But he did not make it Shaivite. Its worship of Shiva is of a pre-Shankaracharyan type.

The Dharmshala which we occupied here was a delightful piece of architecture. It consisted of two storeys, of which we occupied the upper. It was built of mud and timber, and had immense bo-trees outside. The upper floor consisted of a large verandah with a row of pillars running down the middle from end to end, and one little room tucked into the corner. It was like the realisation of a cave at Ajanta or Ellora as a welling-house. But alas, it was set with its face to the Prayag,* which we could not see, even then, and its back to the wind-filled gorge, and in all the heat of the turbid night that we spent there, there was not a breath of air!

We were off early next day, to do ten miles and reach

* It ought to be explained, for non-Hindu readers, that *prayag* means simply confluences, or junction, and that these geographical points are held peculiarly holy, in Hinduism.

a halting-place called RAMPUR. On the way, we passed a dak bungalow called Kolta, for which, had we desired to use it, we ought to have taken the key at the Ranibagh Bazaar, half a mile earlier. On reaching Rampur, we could not dream of consenting to stay. There was no Dharmshala and even the Chappars were only woven of boughs. There was no water either, except what was horribly dirty, and the dried-up stream, with its bed and banks full of nameless horrors, looked like the haunt of all disease. We decided, though it was already late, to push on to BILWAKEDERA, five miles further. On arriving there, we found that there was no accommodation for a night's stay. We could only cook and eat a meal, rest, and then proceed some three miles further to Shrinagar. Even the rest was not without its perils, in our leaf and bough-woven shelters. If it had not been for a tiny Pucca hut that stood by the riverside *a propos* of nothing at all, we might all have ended our halt by an attack of sunstroke. As it was, we took possession unimpeded, and so were able to mitigate the fierceness of the exposure, by taking turns at resting there.

The scenery from Deva Prayag to Bilwakedara had been bare and austere,—narrow winding gorges, steep precipices, and little hanging paths. Once or twice we had passed a few pine-trees, only to come again immediately on bo-trees and cactus. It is really in the Himalayas, by the way, that the bo-tree is worshipped. More or less of an exotic, in those hot valleys, it is treasured where it occurs, and terraces are built about it, till it becomes quite a landmark. The bazaar at Kotdwara is built on two sides of a long parallelogram, down the middle of which run three terraced bo-trees. There is no need to speak of its uniqueness, amongst trees of a lesser growth. Where the small hill-mangoes rarely ripen, the density and coolness of the bo is unexampled. For centuries, in fact, its shade has been the village school. And the saying that when thunder is heard, schools should break up, is said to be a tradition of this fact.

At Bilwakedara a small stream joins the Ganges, and on a high rock which rises just at this point, stands a charming little temple. Opposite is said to be the place where Markandeya went through his Tapasya, and there, when Amavasya falls on a Monday there is always a specially marked celebration. I was overjoyed at this fact, for I had expected to trace out something of the history of Mother-worship, on our way up the mountains, and here was a most important link, perhaps the last and greatest of all. The temple of Bilwakedara itself is to Shiva, and contains many fragments of old and extremely refined carvings. The priests say that it was formerly immensely wealthy in these remains of a great age, but that the Gohonna Flood, fifteen or twenty years ago, swept all into the Ganges, what remains being only the little that could be recovered. There is an old Shiva of the sixth to seventh century type, and one little figure which might be the teaching Buddha. Again there is a carved footprint, and a beautiful lotus in the pavement. Besides all which, there are many early Narayanas and Devis. Evidently a very ancient site, marked by great energy of the higher religious activities. Was there an early monastery here?

In the evening we reached Shrinagar.

Place.	Distance.	Remarks on accommodation.
Shrinagar,	18 miles	from Deva Prayag—A City with dharmshalas and dak bungalow.
Battisera,	8 miles	
Chhantikhal,	1½ miles	Dak bungalow. Two villages with chappars.
Rudraprayag or Pundar,	11 miles	City. Dak bungalow and dharmshalas.
Agastyamuni,	12 miles	Dharmshalas. Kund Chatty, 9 miles.
Gupta Kashi,	10 miles	Dharmshalas.
[Pilgrimage to Triyugi Narayan begins here]		
Fatta Chatty,	7 miles	Dharmshalas.
Bhim Chatty,	3 miles	
Rampur Chatty,	2 miles	
Gouri Kund,	10 miles	Dharmshalas.
Rambarrah,	4 miles	
Kedar Nath,	8 miles	Pandas' guest houses.

We reached SHRINAGAR on the evening of the twenty-third, or five days after leaving Hardwar. The present town stands near the centre of a wide flat vale, in which the cactus and the bo-tree proclaim a sub-tropical climate. It is obviously new, having been re-built on a slightly different site, so lately as the time of the Gohonna Flood about fifteen years ago. This event was a great epoch-maker, throughout the valleys leading up to Badri Narayan. It has swept away ancient temples and images, and necessitated the re-building of many a town and village. One cannot but mourn the loss of historic remains of priceless interest, but at the same time one suspects that, from a sanitary and cleansing point of view, this flood may have done more good than harm. Like the Great Fire of

London in 1667, it seems to have wiped out the past, and banished disease-germs as well as carvings. Perhaps the living men and women on the pilgrim-roads have more cause to bless than to lament its memory.

Shrinagar has been re-built, as already said, since the flood, but the site of the older city is still evident enough, as one enters from the south, by the clustering of temples and shrines, amongst the cactus hedges and peepul-trees of the wide open plain. There are many still older temples to be seen from the road, of a ponderous and severe beauty in a type immediately preceding that of mediæval Orissa. They are comparatively small, but marvellously perfect. The style must have persisted long in the Himalayas, hence there are examples of it, in more developed and slender form, even here at Shrinagar, as modern as two hundred years old, but the earliest examples must be very old indeed dating from the days of the Hindu Revival under the Guptas, that is to say from about 400 A.D. or even earlier. Even the town of Shrinagar, as it was at the time of the flood, was only founded, it is said, by Raja Ajaipala in the year 1446, so that it could not be regarded as old from an Indian point of view. But the fact is that there must always have been a city here, ever since the Himalayas began to be inhabited, and certainly ever since the coming of the Ashokan missions.

The geographical situation, in the midst of a valley that is almost a plain, forces the formation of an organic centre. The height is only about sixteen hundred feet above the sea, so it supports a sub-tropical vegetation and at the same time is accessible to all the cooler airs of the higher mountains. We can well imagine how the first colony of Buddhistic monks would gradually settle down, and live their monastic life, with its regular worship, preaching, and study, contented in the main to become an organic part of the life about them. Actual traces of their occupation have all been obliterated long long ago, but wherever we find a very old religious dedication, which has been a

sheet-anchor of worship for century after century, we may infer with some certainty that it was established by them. Such centres exist at Shrinagar in the Temples of Kamaleshwara and of the Five Pandavas. Of the two, Kamaleshwara is probably the older. The story told in the Puranas of the Mother, is here appropriated to Shiva, and He appears as the god to whom Rama made the offering of blue lotuses! There is a Shiva here of Pre-Shankaracharyan type, and the temple stands in a large and ancient enclosure, round which are houses and other buildings. Vaishnavism also has flowed over Kamaleshwara in its time, for there are scores of votive tablets carved with the feet of the Lord. But the place has never forgotten its Shaivite origin, and claims to have been visited by Shankaracharya, which we should certainly expect to have been the case. The old temple of the Five Pandavas, stands on the roadway into Shrinagar.

Was there once an intention of laying out the whole country with temples dedicated in order to the heroes and Munis of the national epic? One shrinks from the thought of a task so gigantic, but there seems some reason to think it may have been contemplated, and the fact that most of these must since have disappeared, is no real argument against it. The Himalayan kingdom has always been in such vital contact with the Hinduism of the plains, through Sadhus and pilgrims and merchants, that it has shared to the full in each period as it rose, and each wave has been followed by another striving to efface the traces of that which preceded it. In this particular temple of the Five Pandavas, the Vaishnavism of Ramanuja has left its mark. There is a grotesque image of Narada worshipped here which is said to commemorate the primeval Swayambara, where Narayana chose Lakshmi to be his spouse. The bride shrank from the appearance of Narada, who sat immediately in front of his master, and looked at Narayana himself instead. This was indeed the end to be attained, for she was the destined bride of God. But the method

involved a wound to Narada's self-love and for this he cursed Vishnu—the devotee cursed God!—saying that in a future birth as Rama he would have trouble with this wife. This is evidently a late and corrupt tale, intended to appropriate an image said to be Narada's, and to synthetize all the developments through which Vaishnavism had already passed, claiming them as historic phases of the mediæval form preached by Ramanuja.

Vaishnavism made a strong impression at Shrinagar. It seems to have been held meritorious to make a pilgrimage there, and give offerings at the shrine of Lakshmi-Narayana, in lieu of going all the way to Badri Narayana. There is one grand old temple, erected, for this purpose, four hundred years ago. Unfortunately it is now surrounded by a cactus-hedge, and is therefore inaccessible. It was superseded two hundred years later by a building of much poorer architecture. But the traditions are interesting. The Garura in front of the later temple is said to be inferior to that which originally stood there. This, it is said, was so beautiful that it flew away! 'Even this,' the guide will add, with pardonable pride in local gods, 'is such as you will not often see.' Alas, I could not share his high opinion of the present Garura as a work of art!

There have been many Shrinagars, and one of them at least would seem to have been connected with the consecration of a great rock altar to Devi. If the tradition is to be trusted, human sacrifice was practised here, and there is a story of the splendid indignation of Shankaracharya, who hurled the stone of sacrifice upside down into the river, and left to the sight of future generations only its bottom. If this was so, Shankaracharya would appear not only as the enemy of Tantrikism, but also as the reformer of Mother-worship, in this matter. The rock is some miles out of the present town, and stands near a great deodar cedar on the opposite bank.

From Shrinagar, we went eight miles, and stayed at a dak bungalow called CHHANTIKHAL. The dharmshala

here is only six and a half miles from Shrinagar, and is called BATTISERA. It is very unsheltered, in a ravine, and there is little water. There is no other dharmshala for about four miles, but this march is through beautiful forest, and two and a half miles are descent. At Chhantikhal we were for the first time amongst the pines. How wonderful it is to lie awake at night and listen, and in the darkness, to the sound in their branches, like the song of the sea, "Parabrahman! Parabrahman!" There is no undergrowth in a pine-forest, and every evil or unclean thing is spontaneously banished. Insects flee from their strong hot fragrance, and even flies cease to be troublesome. How grand is India, possessing within her boundaries every kind of beauty? She could not but be the home of a vast and complex civilisation.

RUDRA PRAYAGA, eleven miles beyond Chhantikhal, is the last halting-place on the common road to Kedara and Badri. It is magnificent. Immense crags and boulders lie piled beside the stream, and the water boils and foams in its rocky bed. Here the Alakananda and Mandakini meet, and lower down, at Deva Prayag, we had seen the junction of this united stream with the Bhagirathi or Ganges proper. But it must be understood that to the people who live along their banks each one of these rivers is the Ganges itself. Each one is holy. Each man's local river is to him the head-water of the sacred flood. This is a spirit one cannot refuse to admire. Rudra Prayag is a little place built on the point between the streams. There is a long temple-stair, as at Deva Prayag, leading down to the Prayag, and a couple of small temples set at the top. It is said to have suffered terribly in the floods. The old temple was literally carried away. On the near side, the mountains have receded slightly and left room for a grove of mangoes and bo, while on the slopes behind, and far above, are the pines with their perpetual chant.

At AGASTYAMUNI, after twelve miles of journey, we entered a more obscure and ancient world. The road from

Rudra Prayag onwards had been terrible, but the scenery wild and beautiful. Everything henceforth was on a smaller scale. Agastyamuni itself was the most primitive of places. Here the Rishi Agastya had done his Tapasya, they said. The same is told of Kashmir, a valley formed in the same way as this. Comparing the two and remembering that the Rishi is said to have drunk up the ocean, we were all inclined to regard the tale as a geographical myth, referring to a time when the valley was a lake. The soil is so evenly placed here, as also in the vale of Shrinagar, that there is no room to doubt that it really was once a lake, and that geologically speaking, at no distant epoch. Are myths like this of Agastyamuni, dim memories of something seen by primitive man, or are they a kind of Physical Geography, deliberately invented for educational purpose? The last suggestion does not sound so absurd at the place itself, as it certainly does on paper. At Agastyamuni, for the first time, we found the temple enclosing a square which once contained the village, and even now held several dharmshalas. We had seen this square already in the temple of Kamaleshwara, but there it was within a building in a large town ; it did not itself stand as the principal feature, and constitute what was evidently the old market-place. The fields about Agastyamuni were very beautiful. Great trees offered shadow here and there, and pebble banks ran by the side of the road, as we left the place next day. Under a great bo, we found a number of exquisitely beautiful images, gathered together as a Kshetra-Pal. These attested the old importance of the place. But the heart of the whole was the temple. The great court, they told us, was the scene of Agastyamuni's Tapasya, and he was commemorated by an image in the principal chapel. But there was a stone Guddee in the middle with a smaller seat beside it, which the people regarded as the throne of Ramachandra. This is only one of many signs of the ancient and deep-seated impression made on this region by the Ramayana. All through our

visits to sacred spots, we found that 'the age of Rama' was used as an indication of profound antiquity. There is an idea that the hero himself once visited these parts. And every village otherwise nameless is called Rampur, or something equivalent. "This place has been here since the days of Ramachandra," they say, as the utmost that they can conceive in age. Hence the two seats in the old court of Agastyamuni have a significance of their own, whatever their actual function may have been.

But besides this, there are a thousand interesting scraps. In the porch there is an image of Narasinha. In some of the chapels there are plaques and masks of the Nine Planets, of Narada, of Ganesh, and of old Buddhist carvings. Some one brought here the head of a stone Bodhisattva. There is also a chapel to Shringi Rishi, the father of Shamika, in the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata. And there is an ordinary Shiva in an old square watercourse, while outside there is an emblem that ought to be famous for its peculiarity of form, a Dharmachakra that is really a Shiva of pre-Shankaracharyan type. The people call it a Brahmamurti, which fact is again almost as important as the form itself. Four wheels or Chakras are placed one on each side of the top of a short pillar. The top of the pillar is a cube as is also its foot: but its shaft is octagonal. The cube surmounted by the octagonal shaft, surmounted by a thimble-shaped top, is the form of Shiva which was common before Shankaracharya. The temple-enclosure which may once have been the court of a monastery, and then and afterwards the village square and market-place, still contains dharmshalas. It is half inn, and half cathedral close. In inn-yards of this type were played the miracle-plays and moralities of mediæval England. And here, if a party of strolling players came along, or a group of students went out with their magic lantern, it would be in the temple court that the country folk would foregather for their entertainment. Outside, all is of the most primitive. The sanitation is also, sad to say, not very

advanced in kind. But the beauty of these mediæval settings is wonderful, and all about the place are the wide fields and those cool winds that go with the rushing stream.

The cloister-like court is still more noticeable at Gupta Kashi twelve miles further on. Here the temple-court actually adjoins the village-square in which we are housed, and the whole is like something seen in a play. Merchants come, and sadhus clad on ashes, with matted locks, perform strange worships round fires of cow-dung, and the simple life of the pilgrims is lived before one's eyes. We reached Gupta Kashi through some of the most wildly beautiful scenery that the world can contain. There is one long glen which is surely the very crown of the earth's loveliness. At the end, we came out on a group of shelters called Kund Chatty, and when we had reached our destination we much regretted that we had not insisted on waiting at Kund Chatty till the cool of the day, so hard and arid is the climb, in the fierce noon-sun, between it and Gupta Kashi. If we had done this, however, though we should have had greater physical comfort, we should not have drunk so deep of the middle ages as we did on reaching Gupta Kashi. This village regards its own claims to recognition as resting on the shrine of Vishwanatha, in the temple hard by the Dharmshala. This they only profess to have owned since the era of the troubles under Aurangazeb. But the site is, in fact, immensely older. There are two temples in the one court, as so often happens, and one is that of Vishwanatha, with images of Narayan outside the door, while the other is to Ardhanari, a very very old and quite pre-Shankaracharyan dedication. The place has underground drainage, covered by flags like Benares and Mauryan Pataliputra.

A very interesting feature of the pilgrim-life, as one sees it in a spot like this, is its leisure and freedom for refined pursuits. Half an hour after arrival, when those whose duty it is to cook have taken up their work, all the others may be seen seated each little party round its own

mat or carpet, deep in conversation, or listening to some one whose words are heard with evident respect. It reminds one of the stories told of travellers in the Arabian Nights. These people are, some of them merchants, some of them pilgrims; their packages are all bestowed under cover; their animals are being fed and watered by their appointed servants, and they themselves are ready for their meal, when it shall be announced. Meanwhile they are at no loss. Some one is telling a story, or reading from a book, or they are all absorbed in conversation. Thus for the men. The women are still threading their laborious way, doubtless, from shrine to shrine and salutation to salutation, and have not yet begun to think of comfort. But, this civilisation of the men reminds one, I do not know why, of merchant-civilisations everywhere. It seems to belong to that stratum of evolution, and one's thoughts are driven back on those scholars who say that long before the appearance of royal and military nationalities, the whole of the East was covered, more or less, with a great merchant organisation emanating from the Bharatas, and ramifying over the then known world, a mercantile civilisation, which moreover, laid the foundation of all, that Europe has since gained of culture either moral or intellectual. Can it be that here, in this life, of which, as one sits on the stone window-seat overlooking the square at Gupta Kashi, one catches a glimpse, we have a surviving fragment of the Age of the Caravans? Yonder, in the Dharmshala opposite, sit the caravan-chiefs, and the talk they hold amongst themselves is of distant lands and the opportunities of trade, and is yet to build up results, in migrations of faiths and learning and customs, of which they, talking, little dream. We are back in a distant æon, and the nations of Europe and Asia that are to be born of the tendencies here at work, are still in the future.

The road to Fatta Chatty, the village of the Ruins, which is our next stopping-place, is of surpassing interest.

A very short distance out of Gupta Kashi the way divides, for Ukhi Math on the one side, and Kedar Nath on the other. Soon after this, we are in the midst of an old religious centre of great importance. On the hill opposite is Ukhi Math, the present winter-seat of the Kedar Nath order of Shankaracharya. Here on this side is Nalla Chatty, with a temple which contains ancient Shaivite remains, together with relics of the great age in sculpture, Bodhisattvas and the rest. But the great thing is a memorial of some kind, perhaps a Jayastambha or Kirtistambha, as the people themselves suggest, which is evidently a curiously modified Buddhistic Stupa. There is also a host of little temples which mark the transition from Stupa to temple, and give us the link sought so long in the evolution of the Bengali temple. Most of the site is disused. The little temples have become meaningless to the villagers. There is a great dais or platform on which sacred memorials seem at some far past time to have been crowded, and this reminds us of Kamaleshwara at Shrinagar, where we have an example of the same kind. But the great feature of the place is an immense unenclosed terrace, representing the monastery-court or vilage-square, which stands on the face of the hillside looking out over the valley, and having access to an old road from the riverside which the villagers call the Gangarastha. Interesting things, amongst them a stone Guddee, are scattered about and around this terrace. It has a swing, too, and doubtless is still used for village-festivities. Ancient life was vastly more coherent and organic than modern, and monastery or temple was the scene, not merely of prayer and meditation, but also of school and play, of bazaar and parliament, of drama and art and hospitality. It is because they are the heirs of all these multifarious functions and activities that the ancient sites have to this day so complex an aspect.

Thus the front of Nalla Temple overhangs the river, while its opposite entrance is on the pilgrim-road. The whole sacred enclosure lies between. The road now winds

down into the valley, and it becomes evident from the character of the village-buildings and farmhouses, as we pass, that there has been wealth and splendour, once upon a time, in this unknown place. Another feature of past glory that we notice throughout this particular district is the care of the water. The valleys are rich in springs and streams, and these are very carefully and skilfully engineered for irrigation and then made to debouch at convenient places for bathing and drinking, through old carved spring-heads. When this sign of advanced civilisation ceases, we may believe that we have passed beyond the influence of an old civic and monastic centre. On our return journey, in a very different part of the Himalayan kingdom, I was able to see the same thing again, at a place called Musaki Nau, between Pauri and Kotdwara. The care and worship of water is always in this country the mark of a deep and splendid civilisation. The worship of rivers has a new meaning for me since I have made the Northern Pilgrimage. I can see now that it has had much to do with the preservation of drinking-water from defilement, and has expressed royal responsibility for checking of infection. Nalla, then may have been an early Buddhistic site. It is not unnatural that monasteries should give place to temples, although the true arrangement is undoubtedly that which we now see at Bodh-Gaya, where the temple stands outside, and the monastery, in a place apart, guards it and cares for it. There is a tendency, when learning grows dim, for monks to build a shrine in their own enclosure and conduct regular services there. This shrine, when the order has disappeared, falls to the care of the Brahmins or secular clergy, who thus acquire a vested interest in its maintenance. Hence we may find a temple where there was once a monastery. In this way we may account for the origin of Kamaleshwara in Shrinagar, and of Nalla Temple here. But it is not so clear that Gupta Kashi and Agastyamuni were also monastic, though it is not impossible. In these, the temple square has more of

the *Place,* or civic element, and less of the sacerdotal and purely theological.

When we have gone a few miles further and have passed through what seems to have been an old-time city of importance, we come to Bhethu Chatty. Here there are two temples, standing together on the roadside, and an immense cluster on the opposite side. The two on the road itself are the older. One, the older of these again, is to Satya-Narayan. The other is to Birbhadra, or Shiva. On the other side of the road, the main temple is to Lakshmi-Narayan, and this adjoins a tank which has no less than seven small temple-like shrines on its sides. Altogether the small shrines dotted about the main temple of Lakshmi-Narayan here are twenty. There is also a curious monument with an inscription, which the people call a Kirtistambha. All the temples and shrines are surmounted by Amalakis. Going back to the temples of Satya-Narayan and Birbhadra, on the other side of the road, we find that there is in this case also a tank with many little shrines about it, down in the valley below, not far from the river. The Lakshmi-Narayan centre evidently imitated all this, at a later age. In three small shrines which are in a row behind Satya-Narayan and Birbhadra, with a large bo tree beside them, I found one old Shiva, and in all cases square watercourses. Amongst the small shrines clustered about Lakshmi-Narayan on the opposite side of the road, I found one small Chaitya-like building covering a spring. The architectural form, and the fact that on the lintel of the door is a medallion containing Ganesh, would go to show that this is more ancient than the shrines near it, and perhaps belonged to the Birbhadra centre, before the Vaishnava movement of Ramanuja caused the building of a Lakshmi-Narayan temple here. The Chaitya form cannot fail to suggest the Buddhist period. Bhethu Chatty is part and parcel of some chapter in history, which, if it could be unravelled, would tell us much about a series of religious transitions

through which the Himalayan peoples have passed, beginning with Buddhism, and ending with Vaishnavism. The centre of which it forms a part may be said to extend from Gupta Kashi on the south, to Bhethu Chatty on the north and even to include Ukhi Math on the opposite side of the valley. This whole region has been the theatre of much religious and monastic history.

FATTA CHATTY, where we next passed the night, was only seven miles in all from Gupta Kashi. It was a very lovely place, with large mud and timber-built houses, a stream with a mill-wheel, and one immense deodar. This is perhaps the place to speak of the architectural beauty of the chatties. The room we occupied at Fatta Chatty that night was the most perfectly proportioned chamber I have ever inhabited. It was large and low, with great beams of wood, open verandah-like windows with wide seats, and mud-floor. The social dignity, and something very like splendour, that are expressed in such a building cannot be described. But Indian people are so accustomed to architectural beauty in domestic buildings that it does not strike them, as it does one of long European associations. The palaces of kings in Europe would be proud to contain rooms as lovely as the rustic halls in these Himalayan villages. At Fatta we had special opportunities also for admiring the care spent on the springs and the fountain-heads.

Our next stopping-place was Gouri Kund, ten miles away. On the way, we passed Bhim and Rampur Chatties. We also passed Sone Prayag, a rude and dangerous-looking bridge over a river-confluence. Here last year there was a good modern bridge, but it broke suddenly, under the weight of two hundred pilgrims who were all on it at the same moment. For it is said that never was there seen a year like the last, for the multitude of the pilgrims. On the occasion in question, some forty or fifty were, it seems killed, and another forty or fifty maimed or injured. Many of course escaped hurt altogether. Incredible as it sounds,

the bridge has not yet been mended, and pilgrims have still to cross by some sort of makeshift contrivance.

The scenery of this day's stage was very fine. We went through long defiles of mountains, pine, fir and cedar clad. Gouri Kund itself is ancient and squalid. At least one pre-Shankaracharyan Shiva may still be traced, and there is a tank in a sacred square. It is here that we find the hot springs that belong to Kedar Nath. The pavements speak of the age of the village, and though one looks upon them tenderly for this, one is not altogether reconciled thereby to their dirt and slush.

Eight miles further is KEDAR NATH itself. The road, on this final day, is terrible, especially the last four miles of steep ascent. Soon after leaving Gouri Kund a road branches off for Triyugi Narayan, evidently the rival shrine of the Vaishnava period. At the foot of the hills the last chatty we pass is Rambarra, a damp exposed place where it would not be wise to pass the night, and this fact makes the final stage of the journey doubly hard for old or infirm persons. About the beauty of the scenery one could not say enough, but the difficulties of the climb ought not either to be forgotten. It is a dolorous stairway, as hard as life itself, in very truth, as the Panda ruefully said to me, "the way to Heaven!" All this is forgotten however when at last we reach the uplands and begin to feel ourselves within measurable distance of Kedar Nath. We are now amongst the wide turf-covered tablelands, and the flowers begin to abound, as in some paradise of Mogul painters. At every step, we pass or are passed by other pilgrims. The eagerness round and about us is indescribable. At last comes the moment when the temple is visible for the first time. A shout goes up from our carriers and others, and many prostrate themselves. We press forward, more rapidly than before. It is even now a mile or so to the village. But at last we arrive, and entering find that the shrine itself stands at the end of the long avenue-like street, with the mountain and glacier rising

sheet behind it, as if all India converged upon Kedar Nath as its northern point, and all roads met at the sacred feet of the Lord of Mountains. Probably, when first the temple was built in this spot, it was actually on the edge of the glacier, which in all these centuries has retreated only to a distance of less than a mile. We had made great efforts to reach our goal on a Monday, for this is held a great benison in visiting a shrine of Shiva. But when we arrived, it was the middle of the day, and the temple was closed till the evening Arati. As the afternoon ended, the cold blue mists came down from the mountains, enwrapping everything; and one sat out in the village street, watching cowled forms, in their brown Kombols, pacing back and forth through the mist before the tight-shut doors. Suddenly we were called to see the Arati. Darkness had fallen, but the mists had gone, and the stars and the snows were clear and bright. Lights were blazing and bells clanging within the temple and we stood without, amongst the watching people. As the lights ceased to swing and the Arati ended, a shout of rapture went up from the waiting crowd. Then the cry went out to clear the road, and the rush of the pilgrims up the steep steps began. What a sight was this! On and on, up and up, they came, crowding, breathless, almost struggling, in their mad anxiety to enter the shrine, reach the image, and at the last, by way of worship, to bend forward and touch with the heart, the sacred point of the mountain! For this half-embrace is what the worship consists of at Kedar Nath. They poured in at the great south door, out by the east. On and on, up and up, one had not dreamt the place contained so many people as now planted forward to obtain entrance. Suddenly, from one of the door-keepers I heard an exclamation of pity, and then he stooped and tenderly lifted a little bent old woman, bowed down under the weight of years, who had lost her footing in the crowd and might have fallen and been trodden underfoot. It was one of the sights of a lifetime, to stand there, in the black darkness at the top of the

steps, and watch the pilgrims streaming in. It seemed as if all India lay stretched before One, and Kedar Nath were its apex, while from all parts everywhere, by every road, one could see the people streaming onward, battling forward, climbing their way up, all for what?—for nothing else than to touch God!

We had a wonderful walk next day, to the glaciers and the heights, for a while and some of us rested on a hillside, listening to the perpetual muffled boom of the avalanches, as they ceaselessly broke and fell from some part or other of the great ice-mass to the north. "Yes," said the peasant who guided us, thoughtfully, as he stood gazing with us at the glacier. "It looks as if it stood perfectly still. But really it is moving, like any other river!" The great temple looked small and distant now, like a village-church, and only the towering heights seemed grand enough for the worship of God. We felt this still more when we stood and looked up at the vast snowy expanse that they call the Mahaprasthana, the Great Release. For the Pandava story culminates at Kedar Nath, and we are shown the very road by which Yudhishthira and his brothers and the Lady Draupadi went, on that last great journey by which they reached the end. Others since then have followed them, it is said, and have signed their names, at the last, on a great rock-face that stands on the way. We made our way there, and sure enough we found numbers of Trisuls drawn in white and black and red, in wavering lines, some of them, as if by hands that shook with age, and some of them strong and firm, but all, if the country-folk are to be believed, the autographs of those who felt that desire was ended, and the supreme renunciation theirs to make. "For the Shastras," say those who know, "make man free of society at two places, Kedar Nath and Allahabad." Surely Allahabad must once have been very beautiful!

The site of Kedar Nath is very old. There is a temple of Satya-Narayan built over a spring, in the village-

street. There is also a tiny chapel, containing the nine forms of Devi. There are pre-Shankaracharyan Shivas, also, and square watercourses, dotted about the central shrine. On the whole it would seem as if, at the period commonly referred to as the visit of Shankaracharya. Satya-Narayan had been superseded by Shiva as the principal deity. And the Devi-worship which was probably still older than Satya-Narayan remained henceforth side by side with it, in a similar subordination. This question, of the order in which its pre-Shanakaracharyan phases succeeded one another, is the great crux of the story of Hinduism!

The carving round the doorway of the temple is evidently ancient, and the ornament consists of Hinduistic figures of gods and kings contained in niches, not unlike those which contain Buddhas, in the last of the art-periods at Ajanta. This would predispose us to assign a date between the expulsion from Gandhara 751, and the year 1000 A.D., leaning somewhat to the latter, because of the very manifest decadence in style. We must remember that the importance of Kedar Nath as a place of pilgrimage has always kept it in touch with the Plains, and that at the same time there seems never to have been any Mohammedan invasion of these Himalayan valleys. These facts explain why it is possible to find in this remote spot an important link between older Buddhistic and later Hindu sculpture.

Above all, Kedar Nath is the shrine of the Sadhus. As in the days of Buddhism, so in those of Shankaracharya, and as then so also now, the yellow robe gleams and glistens in all directions. There is no begging, for the Sadabratas supply all the wants of monastic visitors. But there is a world of enthusiasm, and still the tradition goes amongst them that Kedar Nath is a place of good omen for Sannyasis, for here came Shankaracharya and falling into Samadhi died!

It was the second day of our stay when an old man

who had been seriously ill for many months, reached the place and made his Darshana. He had ended his journey, and hastened to fulfil his vow within the hour. But scarcely had he done so, barely had he ceased from prayer, not yet was the rapture of achievement abated, when the battle was declared for him to be finished, and in the bright morning air, with long sighing breaths, his soul went forth. Such is the benediction with which the Lord of Mountains lays His hand upon His own!

III

Place.	Distance.	Remarks on accommodation.
Gouri Kund	8 miles	
Fatta Chatty	10 miles	
Ukhi Math	7 miles	Dharmshalas. A large
Potibassa	8 miles	village.
Bunea Kund	2 miles	
Chota Chobda	10½ miles	Dharmshalas.
[Pilgrimage to Tunganath here]		
Jungal Chatty	4 miles	Chappars.
Mandal Chatty	4 miles	Chappars.
Gopeshwar	5 miles	Dharmshalas.
Lall Sanghao or Chamoli	15 miles	Dharmshalas and dak bungalow.
Pipalkoti	9 miles	Dharmshalas and dak bungalow.
Garura Ganga	4 miles	
Gulabkoti	9 miles	Dharmshalas and dak bungalow.
Kumar Chatty	3 miles	
Khanoti Chatty	4 miles	
Joshi Math	9 miles	Dak bungalows, Dharmshalas.
Vishnu Prayaga	2 miles	
Pandukeshwara	12 miles	Dharmshalas, dak bungalow of Shashadhara.
Hanuman Chatty	4 miles	
Badri Narayan	8 miles	Panda's guest houses and dak bungalow.

We stopped again, on our return journey, at Gouri Kund and Fatta Chatty. Then we took the road of deep descent into the valley below, and climbing, as cheerfully as we might up the opposite slope, found ourselves at UKHI MATH. From Fatta Chatty to Ukhi Math was about seven miles. It was very impressive to see from a distance a small square terrace below the monastery, and on it some ten or twelve small shrine-like monuments grouped together, near a great bo-tree. These temple-like erections reminded the eye of the shrines at Nalla, and seemed a striking confirmation of the idea that Ukhi Math had only been the last of a series of sites chosen for the winter-monastery of the monks in charge of Kedar Nath. These, however, though so like them, were not shrines, but Samadhis of long dead and gone Mahunts, or, as they are called in the Himalayas, Raouls. They were obviously later in style than the shrines on the other side of the valley, though they differed much among themselves in form. On the same terrace was the old and very beautiful bathing-tank of the monastery. About it and in its little niches were lovely fragments of old carvings. And the view from under the shade of the bo-trees was a superb vision of a semicircle of snows, with a receding vista of interlacing green and purple vales leading up to them. This long ascending avenue makes the snows look as vast here in the forenoon, as at Kedar Nath in the evening. Such a view would be impossible on the other side of the valley, and would almost explain why Shankaracharya should have placed his Math here. A little higher on the hill, in the midst of a village huddled together in terraces, stands the monastery itself. We cannot help thinking that the whole place must be like a fragment of Lhassa.

The Math is a large square building, with an immense and most imposing door, over which is a painted modern cornice, in black and red, of elephants. Within, there is a bazaar and what is almost a whole village, with a large temple in the centre. This temple, however, is still not

so sacrosanct as the small ancient chapel, contained in the verandah-like 'pujar-dalan' at the side. Here is the reason asserted for the site of the Math, in an old altar, to the Mother, said to have been established by Ukha the daughter of Ban Asur. The Ban Asur is a person of whom we constantly hear in this neighbourhood. Who was he? There is a village called by his name, and Gopal Panda assures us that he has left there some remains of fortification. One thinks of the proud Assurs of Assyria—Asur Bani-Pal, and Asur Nuzir-Pal,—as one has seen them in the British Museum, and wonders if traces of some remote invasion by men of the same race are here remembered. Mandhata Raja is also quoted but somewhat vaguely, in connection with the age of the holy site. The carvings in the verandah are mainly Ganeshes, griffins (almost like our unicorns) and Dwarapalas. There are a couple of pieces of carving belonging to Vaishnavism, built into the wall on right and left of a door on the far side of the courtyard. These are very fine indeed. They are much later than the others, but then there is an idea—that Krishna and the Gopis—behind them, which is enough to account for their artistic superiority.

Ukhi Math was originally granted to the order, subject to military service to the old kings of Garhwal, of the same line as the present family, and very fine reading are the copies of deed which have been made from time to time. The present Raoul is said to be the one hundred and twenty-fifth in the succession. Allowing ten years to each reign, which could hardly be too much, this gives us twelve hundred and fifty years of existence, taking us back to something like the middle of the seventh century, for the beginning of the dynasty. It cannot be held impossible that Ukhi Math has been the seat of the order throughout this period. The site is evidently prehistoric. The temple in the middle of the courtyard is built on ancient foundations, and its lowest tiers are still old, though the upper parts are much restored. Again, the cornice of elephants

over the door, though not very old, since it is made of wood, would seem to be old in pattern, and even to form a link with Buddhism. Buddha, the spiritual hero, was always symbolised by the elephant, and the fact that this particular cornice reappears above the doors of other ancient Himalayan monasteries also, seems significant in the highest degree of a continuous link in tradition with the remote past. The one thing that is half-modern—being only late mediæval—at Ukhi Math, is the little group of Samadhis. These are in some cases rude in structure, but even when elaborate, they are surmounted only by half an Amaloki, or by a spiral bud or other purely arbitrary finial ornament. It is only fair to add that the neighbouring tank is fine, and probably older in style than they. This being so, we may perhaps accept Ukhi Math as really an ancient establishment, and regard the group of Samadhis as due to some outbreak of an erratic fashion, many centuries later.

The little terrace is occupied now by a modern hospital, and the doctor and his patients enjoy the repose and shade that were first designed to begin and end the day of pious meditation. The mind can still see the old-time monks pacing up and down them telling their beads or seated, lost in thought at dawn.

This part of our journey will always be memorable to us, for the fact that our gentle Panda here fell in with a Sadhu, in whom was the very bone and meat of all Vedanta. Lost in their argument, the two old men trudged along, with heads close together, pursuing some vigorous train of thought. The Sadhu was of somewhat austere cast, and excitement was not upon him. His voice grew louder and louder, rising to a perfect shout, and with each increment of intensity we could see our Panda's smile broadening and his head nodding still more rapidly. Suddenly the conclusion of the whole matter was arrived at. They sprang, with a simultaneous impulse, to opposite sides of the road, and there stood nodding and sawing the

air at each other, while the later Sadhu, with the emphasis of repetition, continued to vociferate the point of their mutual delight. This quaint spectacle compensated us for much that we might otherwise have felt as sad oblivion on the part of our own companion and guide!

From Ukhi Math it is eight miles to Potibasa; then two miles to Bunea Kund; and still half a mile further to Chota Chobda, another village resting-place. Of all the Chatties I have ever seen, Chota Chobda is the most beautifully placed. The whole series of these places is at the summit of the pass, looking out on a great range of snows which includes Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan as sister-peaks, and also Gangotri and Jamnotri. But Potibasa and Bunea Kund, though high, are in pockets of the pass. Only Chota Chobda is frankly on the open hillside. Here we pass the last of the carpenters' sheds where we might buy wooden bowls, one of the small specialities of the pilgrimage. Underfoot, we have short close turf, absolutely starred in all directions with anemones, blue and white, like English daisies. It is cold and bracing and while we were there, indeed, we had a severe snowstorm. We quitted the height reluctantly enough next morning. and proceeded on the long descent through thick forests, that brought us to Jungle Chatty, four miles off, and finally to Mandal Chatty eight miles from Chobda, at the very bottom of the hill. 'It is at Chobda that the pilgrims leave for Tunganath, such of them as desire to do this extra climb. The beauty of Tunganath is that all the snows can be seen from there, even better than from Chobda. Nor is the journey, it is said, so hard as one would suppose. The Maharaja of Gwalior has made it easy. by cutting paths and mending roads. The Tunganath pilgrims return to the main road again at a dismal place called Bhingoda Chatty where one actually sees the staircase in the mountain by which they have descended.

We were doing double marches in these days, owing to the illness of one of our party, that we might reach a

place called Lall Sanghao or Chamoli, where we should be on the Tibetan Road, and enjoy the resources of a dak bungalow. Thus even on reaching Mandal Chatty, we were still some eight miles away from our destination.

It was at the end of the pass, when still about a mile and a half from Chamoli that we came to Gopeshwara, a place which is almost a town in size, and forms a pilgrimage on its own account. There is a large temple here to the Mother, but Gopeshwara is really Shiva, as the Lord of the Cows. The story told of its foundation is the familiar one of the cow that was followed to the jungle and found to be pouring her milk over a natural Shiva in the rock. Taking this as the altar, says the story, the temple was built over it. In plain fact, we have here a court like that of Bhethu Chatty, on which open the quarters of the Mahunt or Raoul by means of a door, surmounted by the familiar frieze of elephants in red and black. The quadrangle gives access to the temple proper, with all the shrines and memorials that have grown up round it. The place is of unexampled wealth in Shivas of pre-Shankaracharyan type,—cube, octagon, and thimble-shaped top—and even contains two at least of the older four-headed form with one later specimen, covered with what I take to be the feet of the Lord, but said by the country people to be a crore of heads. There was a small Chaitya-shaped shrine containing one of the four-headed Shivas, under a tree. This was the shrine of Anasuya Devi, the goddess who unveiled herself before the child who was Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, to give alms. There is history in this little story, could we observingly distil it out! The old Raoul says with pride that this temple has been here 'since the days of Rama.' One of the most remarkable things about the place is a Trishul of victory made of ancient swords with an inscription. Lower down on the hillside, as we came along, we had seen another temple, with small shrines near it. We were not able to go and explore, but it would not be surprising to find that this was a Vaishnava centre of

the mediæval period. Gopeshwara is the cathedral city of a small independent diocese. Two miles further we came down into the gorge of the Alakananda, and found ourselves in the Canyon-like scenery of the Tibetan Road.

From this point on, the hills about us were almost naked, except of scanty pines, and only played upon by green and purple lights and shadows. Nine miles from Chamoli by an easy march through desolate scenery, is Pipalkoti. Here there is a charmingly situated Amloki-crowned temple in a gorge and in the town itself, an old market-square. In a rude little shrine near the dak bungalow, surmounted by a pre-Shankaracharyan Shiva, are some bits of old carving, with old Narayanas and Devis. The view is marvellous. Golden, green, rice terraces fall away from our feet; then suddenly comes a gap, where the slope dips into the ravine below us; and then steep sombre cliffs and crags rise abruptly beyond, and the whole valley is closed in, in front of us, by this curving line of sharp purple peaks. These lines of steeps and scarps are wild and grand like the scenery of the north coast of Ireland or the west of Scotland, and one can hardly believe that the white sea-gulls are not nesting there, above the scanty pines. We are at a height of four and a half thousand feet.

About nine miles further is Gulabkoti, passing Garura Ganga half way. To worship at Garura Ganga is supposed to be sovereign against snake-bite for the following year. Here we suddenly come upon the sight of the snows again. There is a handsome temple at Gulabkoti, to Lakshmi-Narayan. The landscape grows more and more austere and fine. We go through narrow gorges with cliffs of purple shadows and green blushes. It is on this up-journey that we see best the beauty of colour, though the down-journey, bringing us to exposed places when they are in shadow, is in many respects easier to make.

Two or three miles beyond Gulabkoti is Kumar Chatty, in a pocket of the mountain. Khanoti Chatty is much

better placed. It is about ten miles in all, to Joshi Math, the winter-quarters of the Badri Narayan Raoul and his staff. The main temple is now Vaishnava though it is easy to see that the whole place has once been Shaivite. The bazaar is quaint and interesting. Beside the temple there is a roofed spring, and opposite, the entrance to the monastery. A second square, on the other side of the Math, contains an old Shiva-temple with its bull before it. The main temple of Joshi Math is significant. It is built on a strong terrace of masonry, which supports a series of seven shrines as buttresses. The dedications of these shrines are supremely interesting. One of them, which is Chaitya-shaped in form, in full working order, and evidently important, is to the Nine forms of the Mother—rather incongruous, were it not for the explanations of history, in a professedly Vaishnavite temple! There is also one which contains, as a member of our party tells me, an extraordinarily beautiful Parvati and Mahadeva. There is also a shrine to Ganesh! ! ! We constantly find in these mountain-temples, that even when making changes and restorations fragments of old-building have been used for ornament. In this way, here we find the lintel of the main temple carved with doors of Vihara-cells, surmounted by three horse-shoe patterns evidently representative of ornate Chaityas.

The next day, passing Vishnu Prayag at the bottom of the Joshi Math valley, we come after six miles march, to Pandukeshwar. Vishnu Prayag is a tiny temple perched on a rock above a boiling confluence. The Alakananda and the Vishnu-Ganga meet here in a whirlpool, and the great rapids of the Alakananda, just above, throw up a perpetual vapour, which is really fine spray. The Gohonna Flood entered the valleys we know, somewhat above this point, so Pandukeshwar is the only village on our line of march that escaped it. And this has not been well for Pandukeshwar! The population too is Bhutiya, which cannot be said to improve the cleanliness of the

place. Here there are two temples, standing side by side. Both have succumbed to mediæval Vaishnavism, so it is now impossible to say what were their original dedications, though it is evident enough that the site was Shaivite. One of the temples is slightly peculiar in form. The tower is a cylinder on a cube, with flying gargoyles at the corners. The other is of the usual form, and less old. The place is famous for five copper-plate grants, of which four remain. They were deciphered by Rajendra Lal Mitra, and refer to obscure grants of land. They are most beautiful in appearance, especially one, which bears a bull as its seal.

The next day brings us, with a twelve miles march, to Badri Narayan itself. About six miles away there is a Chatty called Hanuman Chatty, guarding the pass. The road is beautiful, but also a little difficult, though not to be compared in this respect with that to Kedar Nath. Badri Narayan itself is said to have been established by Shankaracharya, who placed it where it is, because of the neighbourhood of the hot springs in the tank close by. In this it differs from Kedar Nath, which holds by the tradition that it was already established, and Shankaracharya only made it famous, a distinction which in all probability is perfectly true. The architecture of the temple is painfully modern, having undergone repair, without regard to history, and the gateway and walls are late Mogul in style. But owing to this very modernness, the worship is better organised, the Pandas may not enter the temple with their clients, and the whole space is reserved for devotion pure and simple. In the course of ages, vested rights have grown up at the Shaivite centre, and the conduct of the Pandas within the temple is irritating in the extreme. As befits a shrine of the Mohammedan period, this Vaishnava temple is even more exclusive than Kedar Nath. But one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen was the walk round it of the pilgrims, telling their beads, in the early morning. They seemed to be lost in a dream of peace and prayer. It is significant of the mediæval form of

Vaishnavism to which it belongs—the same as that of Tulsidas Ramayana—that Ghanta-Karna is the Kotwal of this shrine. Ghanta-Karna, the Man who would not hear the name of Vishnu, belongs to the time of Hari-Hara, and is a purely theological myth of the first order. An older Vaishnavism would have had integral images of Garura and Hanuman. There is a Garura out in the courtyard, but he has evidently been an afterthought. The real guardian is Ghanta-Karna, Kotwal of synthesis.

The turf and flowers of Badri are if possible still more beautiful than what we have already seen. Not so varied nor yet so alpine, for the height is not so great as Kedar Nath. But the turf is short and thick and close, and falls away in terraces with rounded edges, which are strewn with grey boulders of a wonderful weather-tint. Oh the grey of the stones of Badri Narayan! Never have I seen anything else like this, and here and there they were purple, with long fragment trails of wild thyme. There were pink and white briar-roses close to us, and our garlands of welcome were made of many-tinted violet primulas. Four miles from Badri there is a fine waterfall called Basudhara, which all who are young enough ought to see. For us, however, being old, Badri itself, with its glaciers and snows, its velvet terraces and its silver moonlight, was enough. Our only regret was the shortness of our three days' stay.

IV

RETURN:

Place.	Distance.	Accommodation.
Badri Narayan to Chamoli or Lall Sanghao	32 miles	4 days.
Kuvera Chatty	2 miles	
Nanda Prayag	7 miles	Town, with Dharmshalas.
Sounla	3 miles	Dak bungalow and Chatties.
Karna Prayag	13 miles	Town: Dak bungalow; and Dharmshalas.

Here roads divide; ordinary pilgrim route leads to RANI NAGAR, near Kathgodam, *via* Adh-Badri and Mehal Chauri, where the coolies are changed. About nine days' journey. Alternative route for return, by Shrinagar, thence leaving for Hardwar or Kotdwara. If Kotdwara be chosen, the traveller proceeds from Karna Prayag as follows:—

Nagrasso	10 miles	A Dak bungalow only.
Rudra Prayag	10 miles	Town: dak bungalow and Dharmshalas.
Chhantikhal	10 miles	Dak bungalow.
Baltisera	1½ miles	Chhappars.
Shrinagar	8 miles	City.
Pauri	8 miles	Town.
Adoani	10 miles	Dak bungalow and small village.
Kaleth	10 miles	Dak bungalow only, and no water.
Banghat	2 miles	Dak bungalow and Dharmshalas.
Dwarikal	7 miles	Dak bungalow and village.
Daramundi	6½ miles	Dak bungalow and village.
Dagoda	5 miles	Dak bungalow and village.
KOTDWARA	10 miles	Railway to Najibabad.

NANDA PRAYAG is a place that ought to be famous for its beauty and order. For a mile or two before reaching it, we had noticed the superior character of the agriculture, and even some careful gardening of fruits and vegetables. The peasantry also, suddenly grew handsome, not unlike the Kashmiris! The town itself is new, rebuilt since the Gohonna Flood, and its temple stands far out across the fields, on the shore of the Prayag. But in this short time, a wonderful energy has been at work, on architectural carvings, and the little place is full of gem-like beauties. Its temple is dedicated to Naga Takshaka and as the road crosses the river, I noticed two or three old Pathan tombs, absolutely the only trace of Mohammedanism that we had seen, north of Shrinagar.

All this part of the road is embowered in pine-forests. But never did we see anything more beautiful than GOUNLA DAK BUNGALOW. In the midst of springs and streams and pines, it would have been a joy to have lived there for months. KARNA PRAYAG, where the return-routes divide, we reached by moonlight. It was a wonderful combination of rocks, pines, and bo-trees. There is an old temple here, restored since the flood, which is a perfect little museum of beautiful statues. The people call some fragments by the name of Karna, which we felt sure, from the gravity and nobility of the faces, must have been Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. . . . .

We passed many interesting temples on the road next morning,—though none so imposing as that of Karna,—and one in especial, to Chandika Devi, at the village of Punnai. This was twofold, a square rath-like cell, side by side and distinct from the more modern and ordinary tapering obelisk-shrine with the rectangular chamber attached to it in front. The village of this part was excellent, and on a height above, a magnificent stretch of grazing-land had been bought by a merchant, and given in perpetuity to the people, who call it their Gocharra Sorgama. This, enabling them to keep numerous oxen,

may account for the fine ploughing.

Ten miles from Karna Prayag, we reached Nagrasoo Dak Bungalow. This was a lonely place, and inconvenient in many ways. But a bazaar was under construction. Late in the afternoon two hungry and belated pilgrims arrived, and made their meal ready under a tree close by.

Still another ten miles, and we reached RUDRA PRAYAG once more, with its incomparable rocks. Henceforth, down to Shrinagar, where we must change our coolies, the road would be familiar. We should meet with no surprises.

In choosing to return by Pauri to Kotdwara, from Shrinagar, we were influenced by the fact that the road lies nigh, and that there were dak bungalows. Pauri, about 8000 ft. high, is the official station, instead of Shrinagar, and is most pleasantly situated, as regards climate. Our luggage was carried up to that point by coolies, but there we were able to transfer it to mules, for those who have permits for the dak bungalows, nothing could be more pleasant than this road to Kotdwara, and we passed small parties of pilgrims from time to time, who were using it. But it is a long and lonely road, sparsely populated, and for those who may not avail themselves of the bungalows, there must be only scanty accommodation. Kaleth, owing to want of water, is utterly unpracticable for a night's stay; and Banghat, in the valley of the Vyasa Ganga (or Pindar?) is low-lying and malarious, none but boiled water should be drunk there. Dwarikal is on the summit of a mountain pass, and Daramundi and Dagoda, though of wonderful beauty, are low and warm. Kotdwara is the terminus of a narrow gauge railway, by which we reach the E. I. R. at Najibabad.

The historic route for the return of the pilgrims used to be that from Adh Badri and Mehal Chauri to Kathgodam. That road has now been absorbed for military purposes, and a new pilgrim-route opened, which ends at Ramnagar, a station from which Moradabad is easily reached. This new road is splendidly made, but it is still

low and unassimilated. The Chatties are small, and few and far between. Water is difficult to get. Food is scarce and dear. And the accommodation is very insufficient. Doubtless each year that passes will tend to rectify this state of things. More Bunneas will settle along it, and its facilities will be improved. In the mean time, the pilgrim's road is one of austerity, and he is sustained in the toils requisite to reach his distant home, by the thought of how welcome and sweet it will be to rest.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NORTHERN TIRTHA

A Brief Summary of the Sequence of Hinduism as seen in the Himawant.

Buddhism and prehistoric Hinduism, largely planetary; worship of Daksha, Ganesh, Garura, Narasinha, &c.

Hindu Shiva– in succession to Brahma—the four-headed Shivas at Gopeshwar, the four-headed Dharmachakra at Agastyamuni and at Joshi Math.

Era of Devi-worship—Synthetizing itself to Shiva, with Ganesh as son. Nine forms of Devi, Kedar Nath Joshi Math, Shiva and Parvati. Latter, Shiva becomes Arddhanari and the Shiva in three stages as at Gupta Kashi, also Gopeshwar, also Devi Dhura, above Kathgodam, also Kamaleshwar in Shrinagar.

Possible Era of the Ramayana—Dron Prayag and all places named on behalf of Rama, &c.

Era of the Mahabharata, bringing in worship of Satya Narayan. Traces numerous, Vyasa Ganga to Kedar Nath, &c.

Esp. Temple of five Pandavas, before entering Shrinagar.

Shankaracharyan Shiva-worship. Bilwakedar, Kedar Nath, Bhethu Chatty.

Mediæval Vaishnavism. Shrinagar, Gupta Kashi, Bhethu Chatty, Kedar Nath, and the valleys of Badri Narayan.

Shiva again substituted for Narayan at Gupta Kashi under pressure of some special circumstances.

It must be understood that each of these phases is liable to develop itself continuously, from its inception, so that none of the succeeding eras stands alone. At each place named, it may be only a trace that is left of any given era. It must not be expected that the site shall be eloquent of it.

Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan are thus to be regarded as the cathedral cities of adjacent dioceses. Each has its four dependent centres, and the still smaller diocese of Gopeshwara has also its minor sites of religious importance. On the road to Gangotri, there is an old religious capital called Barahat; and Adh Badri must not be forgotten—on the road to Kathgodam. By all, the visit of Shankarcharya,—sometime between 600 and 800 A.D.,— is claimed as if it had been a recent event, vividly remembered, and

this would tend, other things being conformable, to show that these sites were already old, at the time of his coming. We can hardly doubt that this was so. It is evident enough that in his name,—whether he was in fact the Malabari Shankaracharya who wrote the Commentaries, or, as a recent writer, Rajendra Lal Ghose, would have us believe, a Bengali scholar who formed the power behind Shashanka, the anti-Buddhistic king—a strong wave of Shaivism swept up all the valleys of the Himalayas. It was this wave, the work of this gigantic epoch-making mind, that finally purged the Shaivite idea of all its prehistoric, physical elements, and fastened upon Shiva the subtle poetic conception of the great monk, throned on the snows and lost in one eternal meditation. Everything in Hindu imagery of Mahadeva that conflicts with this notion, is pre-Shankaracharyan.

Even in this, however, it must be remembered that Shankaracharya is rather the end of a process than an individual. In the *Kumara Sambhava,* the Birth of the War Lord, of Kalidas, we see the same Aryanising process at work on the congeries of elements that even then were seething and fuming about the feet of one who would fain cast himself upon the ocean of the thought of God as Shiva. A people that had learnt under Buddhism to worship the solitary life of spiritual culture, a people whose every instinct made for the sanctity of the home, and the purity of the family, found themselves on the one hand enrapt by the conception of God as the Great Monk, and on the other puzzled by the presence of Parvati, with a train of alien associations. The riddle was solved by the genius of Kalidas. In the *Kumara Sambhava* he vindicated triumphantly the Indian ideal of woman and marriage. In Uma, we have a vision of life and love in which the Aryan imagination can rest, without tremor or misgiving. The last remnant of early Bacchus-ideals is banished, however, by the stern fiat of Shankaracharya. Even the popular imagination is called into leash. The Great God is established finally, as the light of knowledge within the

soul, Purusha the stirless, the Destroyer of Ignorance. The great prayer to Rudra,—

> From the Unreal, lead us to the Real!
> From Darkness, lead us into Light!
> From Death, lead us to Immortality!
> Reach us through and through ourself!
> * * *
> And evermore protect us Oh Thou Terrible!
> from ignorance,
> By Thy Sweet Compassionate Face!

might well have been the utterance of Shankaracharya, in the hour of placing the keystone in the arch of the national conception.

The emblem of Shiva which was established by the teacher for worship, in supersession of all others, would seem to have been the hump or heap of natural rock, as we find it at Kedar Nath, at the Kedar Nath monastery in Benares, at Bilwakedar, and elsewhere. I found it a few weeks ago, in a temple on the Ganges bank above Dakshineshwar. The emblem that had been in use before his time was undoubtedly that in three stages, cube, octagonal cylinder and thimble-shaped top, the form which was universal in the time of Varaha Mihira, 550 A.D.

But this Shiva was too intimately associated with the image of Arddhanari, even as we find it at Gupta Kashi, to be tolerable to the fastidious mind of Shankaracharya. He would have no Shiva in the midst of his Shaktis,—the interpretation which had now transformed the four-headed Brahma into the Tantrik Mahadeva, as at Gopeshwar, and at Chandra Nath near Chittagong.

Nor would he have a form even remotely capable of a phallic rendering. To this fiery monastic intelligence, such a significance was in itself degradation, and he could not away with it. Back, then, to the ancient sanctity of the mound, back to the purity and simplicity of nature! By a curious irony of history, the violent enemy of Buddhist Tantrik abuses became the restorer of the Buddhist Stupa to worship! The taste of the whole people endorsed his criticism, and even as they seem to have accepted his

repudiation of human sacrifice, in the cause of mother-worship, at Shrinagar, so at each sacred site, they set up the Great God for supreme veneration, and where this deity was new, they established Him in His Shankaracharyan form. At Gupta Kashi, whatever its name then was, Shiva was already worshipped as Arddhanari, and no change was made, though we cannot doubt that the spiritual impact of the new thought was adequately realised. But at Kedar Nath itself, and at Bhethu Chatty, where Satya-Narayan, or Vishnu was the chief deity, Shiva, in His new form was substituted.

The same tide of the Shankaracharyan energy swept also over the valleys leading up to Badri Narayan, and Joshi Math and Pipalkoti still remain, to testify to the pre-Ramanuja Shaivism of these parts. But at Joshi Math there are traces in abundance of a world still older than that of Shankaracharya. Its theological name—Dhyani Badri—suggests to the ear that Badri is a corruption of Buddha, and opens up a long vista of antiquity. Whether this be so or not, its position on the Tibetan road has exposed it to a whole series of influences, from which the more secluded valleys of Kedar Nath have been protected. By comparing the two, we may perhaps succeed in computing the number and importance of the Mongolian elements that have entered into the great synthesis called Hinduism.

The true place of Badri Narayan in history may perhaps be better understood when it is mentioned that it was long a pilgrimage of obligation to the Tibetan Lamas, and that even now certain Tibetan monasteries pay it tribute. It is for them, in fact, the first of that chain of sacred places that ends, for the Buddhistic nations, with Gaya. Seen from this point of view the importance of Badri Narayan as a place of Shrāddha acquires a new significance. It is the holiest of all. The requiem that has been said here, may be repeated nowhere else. The dead whose repose has here been prayed for, reach final peace. It will, I think, be found that there is no special

place of Shrāddha in India, which is not either a place of Buddhistic pilgrimage, or else, like Deva Prayag, an important point on the Tibetan road. And while the habit of prayer for and benediction of the dead is one to which the human heart everywhere must respond, there is not an equal universality, perhaps, in the mode of thought that regards as somehow spoilt and exhausted, the rice, furnishings, and money that are dedicated as oblations to the departed. There is in this an element curiously incongruous with our modern, Indo-European modes of feeling, though it has much that is kindred to it, in ancient Egyptian, and in the Chinese faith. Yet the poetry of the prayer that can be perfected only on the sunlit heights of Badri Narayan, none will, I think gainsay. Here sorrow ends in peace. Here the dead parent and the living child are uplifted together in a common soothing. And the Love of God throbs out, like a lighted lamp within the shrine, across that temple-court, where the women perform Pradakshina, telling their beads, and lost in the dream beyond life and death alike.

The mediæval Vaishnavism that began with Ramanuja and dominated the whole life of India in so many ways, during the middle ages, captured Badri Narayan and its subject seats. But at Kedar Nath, it only succeeded in establishing the minor pilgrimage of Triyugi Narayan in the immediate neighbourhood. The name of this shrine marks the same eager ambition that we saw in the legend of Narada, at the temple of the five Pandavas in Shrinagar, to claim for itself continuity with an older pre-Shankaracharyan orthodox authentic Hinduism. This was the same Vaishnavism that blossomed later into the Ramayana of Tulsidas. It was the same that found expression in Guru Nanak in the Punjab, in Tukaram in Maharashtra, and even—though in such different form!—in Chaitanya in Bengal. Even in the life of Ramanuja, in Chaitanya, in Guru Nanak, and in Tukaram, it is pre-eminently an uprising of the

people. Even in Mira Bai in Rajputana, it represents opportunity for women and in the Himalayas at least it found expression in a new order of architecture, seen in perfection at Bhethu Chatty—the tall lily-like tower crowned with the Amalaki, which is slightly more modern than the great temple of Bhubaneshwara in Orissa, even as that represents a later phase of the Bodh-Gaya type. One of the most interesting problems of Indian history lies in the question why a movement that was marked by so many common features throughout the rest of India, should have assumed so distinctive a character in Bengal. Vaishnavism, as a whole, is a subject that calls for careful and extensive study. Its history will be found to be twisted out of many strands, and it will often happen that some slight disagreement on a point of doctrine or symbolism indicates a difference of ages and of provinces in origin. Going back to the period before the Shaivism of Shankaracharya and before even the Satya-Narayan that superseded, what do we find, of an older Hinduism still? There can be no doubt that the Ramachandra of Deva Prayag is older. Here Ramachandra would seem to have been established before the time of the Guptas (319 A.D. onwards) when Shiva was the chief deity of Hinduism. Just as in the Ramayana itself, so also here at Deva Prayag the one statement made and emphasised is that Rama the Incarnation of Vishnu, *is* Shiva. That is to say, the Godhead of Shiva, when this site was dedicated, was nowhere in dispute. It was not a point that called for argument. We cannot help wondering if there was not an early attempt to *Ramayanise* the whole Himawant, so to say. Lakshman-Jhula and Dronghat met us at the very outset of our journey. And it is certain that "the days of Rama" seem antiquity itself to the people, and that every village not otherwise named is Rampur or Rambarra, or Ramnagar.

Whether this was so or not, it is fairly certain that in the age when a knowledge of the Mahabharata represented ideal culture, a great and authoritative effort was made to

associate this whole region with the Pandavas. That the attempt was undertaken, with an eye to the work as literature, and not on the basis of ancient, prehistoric traditions, is shown by the little chapel dedicated to Vyasa, in the valley of Vyasa Ganga. Here the pilgrim about to follow up the stations of the Mahabharata could first make salutation to the master-poet. Of all the elements contained in this particular stratum of tradition, the personality of Bhima—or, as the people call him, 'Bhimsena'—the strong man of Hinduism, stands out as most prehistoric. There is here something unique, something that has a sanction of its own, in the popular mind, not derived from its place in the national epic. "Bhima," as a member of our own party exclaimed, "is undoubtedly the genuine article!"

If there really was a prior movement for connecting Himawant with the ideas of the Ramayana, succeeded by the Mahabharata-epoch,—bringing in the worship of Satya-Narayan—then before either of these came the great era of Devi. There is a chapel of the nine forms of Devi still, at Kedar Nath, and the oldest and most active of the seven minor temples at Joshi Math contains the same images. In order really to understand this idea, it would be necessary to make a separate and complete study of it, as it is found in all the different parts of India. But in the meantime, it is fairly certain that in its most elaborate form, it made its advent into these mountains before the era of Satya-Narayan, and it is worth while also to note the relationship of its great centres to the Tibetan road. Two of these are Gopeshwara near Chamdi and Devi Dhura above Kathgodam.

The impulse of Devi-worship seems to have been synthetizing. It attached itself to that cult of Shiva which was already accepted and carrying with it the prehistoric Ganesh, established a holy family. No one who has heard the tale of the headless Ganesh, below Kedar Nath, can fail to recognise the fact that this god had already had a history, before being established as the son of Shiva and

Parvati. The frequency of his images is one of the surest marks of age, in a Shiva-shrine, and his medallion over the door of the Chaitya-shaped building that covers the spring at Bhethu Chatty, marks out that structure, as surely as its Buddhistic form, as the oldest of the buildings in the neighbourhood.

Before any of these developments, came the Buddhistic missionaries, who, from the time of the great Nirvana, carried the Gospel to the Himawant. Of this phase of history, little or no trace remains, save in the Chaitya-form of the shrine of the Mother at Gopeshwar, the spring-cover at Bhethu Chatty, and the temple of the nine forms of Devi at Joshi Math, and in the fact that at Nalla we seemed to see the development of the temple out of the Stupa. Whether, besides this, the very word 'Badri'—with its 'Dhyani Badri' as the esoteric name of Joshi Math—is also a trace of Buddhism must be decided by others. One thing is clear. All the Buddhistic texts and deeds that are written on birch bark come from the Himalayas, and as these are many, the Himalayas must have been the scene of great life and activity during the Buddhistic period.

The whole region of the pilgrimage forms a *cul-de-sac* of Hinduism—even better than that of Orissa,—in which one may study the birth and origin of manifold things that have gone to form the great synthesis of the national faith. The sensitiveness that certain sites have shown to the whole historic sequence of religious developments, marks their early establishment as Buddhistic centres. And in every case we find the characteristic that distinguishes the Hindu temple still, the tendency to gather round the central theme or shrine an account of the religion as it stands at the moment. The tendency to crowd on a single site, temple, Stupa, sacred tree, school, monastery and dharmshala is one that may be seen in Buddhist countries still, throwing a flood of light on the genesis of such places as Agastya-muni, Kamaleshwar, Nalla, and Gopeshwar.

The northern Tirtha forms a great palimpsest of the

history of Hinduism. Record has here been written upon record. Wave has succeeded wave. And still the bond that knits these farthest points north, to the farthest south, is living and unbroken, and the people stream along the pilgrim roads, in worship, to testify to the fact that without the conception of India as a whole we can explain no single part or item of the Indian life. But the greatest of all synthesis is that which is written in the minds and hearts of the simple Himalayan peasantry themselves. Successive waves of sectarian enthusiasm have made their country what it is but the people themselves are no sectaries. To them, Shiva, Devi, and Narayan are all sacred, and in their grasp of the higher philosophy of Hinduism, they are, without exception, true Hindus.

जय केदारनाथ स्वामी की जय !

जय बदरी बिशाल की जय !

KEDAR NATH AND BADRI NARAYAN

If any man doubts that Hinduism is the romance of India let him make pilgrimage to the Himalayas and judge for himself. The famous shrines of Kedar Nath and Badri Narayan are like the cathedral cities of two remote northern dioceses upon which has broken for the last two thousand years the tidal wave of every great spiritual movement in Indian history, usually a little late, for the Himalayas have not been central. They have been receptive, not creative. The forces that have overswept them have all originated elsewhere. But sooner or later they have arrived. Sooner or later they have made their impress. Till today, anyone who has thoroughly studied the country between Hardwar, Kedar Nath, Badri Narayan and Kathgodam, cannot fail to know the story of his nation's past, at least in so far as that of her thought can make it clear.

For while religion and philosophy are not the whole of the national life of India, they are undoubtedly the key to that life. Hinduism gives a continuous precipitate, as it were, from Indian history. It is a stratified deposit, and each period of advancing thought has made its own contribution to the series. The two last and most important are represented by the Shaivism of Kedar Nath and the Vaishnavism of Badri Narayan. But these are not the most ancient forms of those ideas. The Shaivism of Kedar Nath quite rightly describes itself as Shankaracharyan, and the Vaishnavism of Badri claims with perfect truth the name of Ramanuja. Neither is primitive. Neither has been accidental. Each in its turn has been a great emotional revival, calling men to return to the memory of an older and purer faith than they saw about them. Shankaracharya, or his movement, took the Himalayas by storm. Traces of the older systems that had preceded him, remain, it is true, to this day, but we cannot doubt that at a given

period the whole region was dominated by his influence, and by the school that he founded. Badri itself was Shaivite then. Even now there remain within the circle of its authority many relics and traces of the age when Mahadeva was as much the centre of worship here as in the sister-diocese.

Each of the two great shrines is built in a glacial valley, and smaller preparatory sanctuaries occur along the roads that lead up to them. A line of Shivas, a line of Narayans, leads to Kedar and Badri. Again, each can only be served by monks in residence for six months in every year. Hence there is in each case a winter-monastery at a distance of some score of miles or so, which acts as a sort of abbey guest-house to the chief shrine. In the case of Kedar Nath this is Ukhi Math, and in that of Badri Narayan it is Joshi Math. In the last-named there is abundance of evidence that it was originally Shaivite and that the tides of Vaishnavism flowed over this pre-existing condition. Some think that the very name is a corruption of Jyotir Math, the probable older form.

The temple of Badri itself is exceedingly modern. That will be a glad day in India when a developed respect for history shall guide the councils of all who have to do with the building and repair of temples! At present they see no reason why the mortar of the master-builder should not be smeared all over the beautiful weathered surfaces of the grey stones of the temples. They call it necessary repairs. As if a skin that was renewed every few years could ever look beautiful to those who loved us! I know nothing that so puts one out of tune for worship as a look of aggressive newness on the face of a church or temple that one knows to be old and fraught with many memories! Even at Joshi Math, the main sanctuary has successfully rid itself of most of the traces of its past. In this case, however, there is a Mala of smaller shrines, built on the edge of the magnificent plinth-like terrace, which have never been interfered with, though some of them have

fallen into decay; and these witness to the history of the spot in unmistakable terms. At Badri Narayan itself, the gateway and ramparts of the temple are not so modern. They are built in a Mogul style of somewhat late type. Within, the only minor shrine is that of Ghanta-Karna, the Bell-eared, who acts as Kotwal of the sanctuary. In temples of the older Vaishnavism, this place would have been held by Garura, as we see throughout the whole Himalayan region.

Badri Narayan, then, stands before us as the evident crowning example of that mediæval uprising of Vaishnavism which began with Ramanuja, and found one of its greatest voices in Tulsidas's Ramayana. This Vaishnavism was all-powerful, apparently, in the Deccan, and in the South. But in Bengal the wonderful personality of Chaitanya gave it a turn of expression which was peculiar to that province and thus prevented the Vaishnavism of his countrymen from taking the more theological, less mythological, form of Lakshmi-Narayan. Hari-Hara, moreover, is obviously the creation of the same age. How unthinkable to us now that there was a time when pious and devout men would not consent even to hear the name of Vishnu! Yet such was undoubtedly the case, and more by token, here is the very head and front of such offending kept up to stand outside His shrine, and, in an excess of passionate chivalry to guard it from all harm!

An interesting question is whether Narayan was always coupled with Lakshmi. The little shrine of Vishnu-Prayag, at the junction of the Dhauli and Vishnu Ganga, just below Joshi Math, inclines me to think not. Here we have an altar of Narayan alone, and on the opposite side of the narrow pathway, obviously a later addition, a tiny chamber of Lakshmi. This looks as if the pairing of the two had been a subsequent concession to popular ideas, which must have been long tinged with the tendency to assume such a duality in the Divine Nature.

The Vaishnava conquest is represented, even at Kedar

Nath itself, by the neighbouring shrine of Triyugi Narayan, —the Narayan of three aeons—on a companion mountain. The fire which burns there is said to have been lighted long ago in Satya-Yuga—a claim which may possibly be an indication of veritable antiquity.

This is not impossible, because there really was an older Vaishnavism, and we do here and there come upon the attempts of the mediæval revival to identify itself with it. The Shiva of Shankaracharya, even at Kedar Nath, supersedes a worship of Satya-Narayan. The same has also happened at the almost deserted temples of Bhethu Chatty, near Gupta Kashi. Now, whoever Satya-Narayan really was, he is claimed by the Vaishnavas as one of the forms of Narayan, and it is clear that he would be equally so held in the early Ramanuja period. From the time that Hinduism begins to emerge into definition and distinctness, against the contrasting background of Buddhism, the whole history of Indian thought becomes a sort of plaiting together of these two threads, in which first one and then the other may be expected to reappear continually. At Kedar Nath there is indeed the question whether the worship of Devi did not intervene, as the officially recognised form, between Satya-Narayan and the Shankaracharyan Shiva. Certainly in the village street, there is a small chapel containing the nine forms of the Mother in sculpture. At Bhethu Chatty, however, there is no trace of Devi-worship. There, Shiva follows hard on Satya-Narayan and there is no long distance of time even between the building of their respective temples. A certain Gandharan pattern is indeed integral to both, and this, if my own theory is correct, might possibly help us to date the earlier as subsequent to 540 A.D.

The worship of Devi has a long and important history of its own, which with the help of these Himalayan regions, is not difficult to make out. Did it come down upon India, already elaborated and highly formalised, from Tibet or China? There is much to favour this view. Amongst

other things, the two most perfect shrines of ancient Mother-worship left in India are both on, or close to, roads between Tibet and the plains. One is Devi Dhura, between Kathgodam and Tibet, and the other is Gopeshwar, near Chamoli or Lall Sanghao, on the Badri Narayan route. There is no denying the immense influence that China has had, in developing some of the Indian images, but chiefly, I suspect, those of the Mother. It would also seem as if the moment of the introduction of Devi in this form had been the same time at which the worship of Shiva took on a phallic complexion, for Pundits and Pujaris, though never for the people as a whole.

The highly elaborate worship of Devi was always associated with Shiva, apparently, as the guardian of Her shrines. And the characteristic form of Shiva at the period in question is that of Varaha-Mihira, namely, a cube surmounted by an octagon, surmounted by the rounded top of the Shiva proper. These Shivas we find constantly, at all the older religious sites, throughout the mountains. And they always mark a development of the site prior to Shankaracharya. But nowhere do they occur in such abundance as at Gopeshwar and Devi Dhura. Gopeshwar indeed carries proofs of having been a recognised religious establishment even before this, for I found there no less than two still surviving, of the four-headed Shivas that are commonly known as Brahmas. This is eloquent and incontestable evidence that in all probability the shrine was originally a Buddhist monastery. Further evidence in the same direction is afforded by the Chaitya-form of the little shrine of Anusuya Devi, standing to the side of the main temple.

With Buddhism we come to the bedrock of Himalayan religion. There is only a trace here and there. Most of the evidence is built upon inference. One or two of these Chaitya-like buildings, and here and there the head of the Bodhisattva, are all the direct testimony that I have been able to find, yet it seems probable that the first religious

organisation of the Himalayas was the work of Buddhism, that all subsequent movements poured their influence in upon the spots which that first enthusiasm had created, and that therefore all the most ancient sites in the Himawant derive their authority and sanctity from the Buddhist orders.

Conspicuous amongst such are those village-squares which are really the temple-close made into bazaar and inn. To this type belong Agastyamuni, Gupta Kashi, Gouri Kund, Ukhi Math, Gopeshwar, Joshi Math, the court of Kamaleshwar in Shrinagar, and more obscurely Kedar Nath itself. This is the kind of inn-yard that saw in England the development of the drama. How full of interest it is! One arrives in the village with all one's baggage, and beasts of burden, and servants, to spend a few hours, and be off, mayhap, before dawn the following morning. One is accorded a place of bivouac in one of the great verandahs that look down upon the court, and at once one becomes part and parcel of the village life. At the far end, yonder is the door that leads into the temple-cloister itself, if indeed it does not happen that the shrine is reared in the very midst of the scene before us. Coming and going, going and coming, are Brahmins and friars, merchants and travellers, and simple pilgrims. Here we watch some grave ceremony of incantation, there again we see a family at their midday meal. Beneath us a moment later is raised the cry of 'thief' and the patriarchal Brahmin appears, to lead away into the more decent seclusion of the temple-precincts an excited woman, her embarassed husband, and the remonstrating youth who stands charged with the villainy. How easy and delightful it would be to fill the court at nightfall with a crowd of villagers, for a magic-lantern lecture, or a Mahabharata Kathakatā! A party of Bengalee students did something of the sort a few years ago, headed by the monk Sadananda, and the auditors came, I have heard, from twelve and fifteen miles, to enjoy the treat.

The prehistoric elements of Hinduism are not missing from even this cursory glimpse of the Himalayas. There has been a definite Mahabharata period when the whole culture-energy of the region seems to have been devoted to dramatising and appropriating the heroes and incidents of the great Epic. There is a little river called Vyasa-Ganga, upon whose banks stands a tiny chapel containing an image of Vyasa! And beyond its boundary lie practically all the associations of the five Pandavas, ending in the great snowy road of the Mahaprasthana at Kedar Nath itself. Could evidence have been clearer that there was once an attempt, definite, deliberate, and literary, to impose the ideas of the national epic on an Himalayan kingdom, of which perhaps this particular river was the frontier, and to parcel it out into a sort of Mahabharata holy land? At Kathgodam, the Pandavas are said to have begun their last pilgrimage, and their road leads us past Bhim Tal, or the lake of Bhima, and past Dhari, their treasury, while the ice-scratches on the rock at Devi Dhura are said to mark the places of their *pachisi*-board!* The caves on the road to Kedar Nath are assigned each to one of the princes, to Draupadi, or to the dog. There are wayside shrines dedicated to them. One of the great Prayags is sacred to the name of Karna. But amongst all these, the one name that impresses one as genuinely pre-Mahabharatan, that is, as non-literary, and savouring of the soil itself, is that of the Hindu Herakles, Bhima, or, as the people call him, Bhimasena. When we come to the village of Agastyamuni, indeed, and learn that the tale of the sage who drank up the ocean is also told of the Vale of Kashmir, which is merely a larger edition of this little valley of Agastyamuni, we can see for ourselves that the story is a pretty geological myth of a ravine that was once a lake. And we feel again a thrill of wonder at the encyclopædic character of the information that went to make up the great poem. But the fact that the geo-

* *An Indian play like dice.*

graphy of distant Himalayan valleys receives notice shows in fact that the culture-level of this neighbourhood was then such as to contribute scholars to the board of composition. Thus we come back to the integral and important part which Himawant must have played in Indian thought ever since the Ashokan organisation of the propaganda. From the facts of literary history it would appear probable that the Mahabharata period between Vyasa-Ganga and Kathgodam must have coincided with the completion of the poem about the middle of the Gupta era. The eagerness of the great dynasty and therefore, by inference, of all friendly and allied states to publish the mighty work and their idea that it contributed a kind of educational scheme is evident enough in many other directions. Hence we cannot be surprised at the energy with which it seems to have been taken up here, nor at the appeal that has been made to the pride of the people and to their love for their beautiful country, in giving them, as it were, a local claim upon it all.

The systematic way in which this was attempted becomes particularly incontestable when we come upon such traces as the shrine and image of Shringi at Agastyamuni. At Shrinagar again, there is a temple of the Five Pandavas. And every here and there we come upon some muni or other, as for instance Kapila Muni. One can imagine the miracle-plays of the Mahabharata that must have taken place from time to time in these temple courts, half theatre, half college, like the rude dramas still seen in the villages of Maharashtra! And what about the Ramayana? Was it an earlier, or a rival scheme to that of the Mahabharata? Close to Hrishikesh, in Lakshman-Jhula begins its terminology, which comes to a head at Deva Prayag, in the temple of Ramachandra. Here we realise what a large and compelling synthesis was offered by early Vaishnavism, for just as we cannot fail to understand that Ganesh has been gathered into the Shaivite scheme from older prehistoric sources, so here we find

Hanuman behind and Garura in front of the temple as guardians, and know suddenly that vast antiquity which these two represent. It must always be a feature of dominant religions that when fully formed they incorporate the debris of preceding systems. Garura is a strangely persistent element of Himalayan religion. He crops up occasionally even on the road to Kedar Nath itself. How remote may have been this at ancient sites is that of synthesis behind the actual dedication.

KALI THE MOTHER

CONCERNING SYMBOLS

Our daily life creates our symbol of God. No two ever cover quite the same conception.

It is so with that symbolism which we know as language. The simple daily needs of mankind, seem, the world over, to be one. We look, therefore, for words that correspond in every land.

Yet we know how the tongue of each people expresses some one group of ideas with especial clearness, and ignores others altogether. Never do we find an identical strength and weakness repeated: and always if we go deep enough, we can discover in the circumstances and habits of a country, a cause for its specific difference of thought or of expression.

In the North we speak of a certain hour as "twilight," implying a space of time between the day and night. In India, the same moments receive the name of "time of union," since there is no period of half-light,—the hours of sun and darkness seeming to touch each other in a point.

The illustration can be carried further. In the word *gloaming* lies for us a wealth of associations,—the throbbing of the falling dusk, the tenderness of home-coming, the last sleepy laughter of children. The same emotional note is struck in Indian languages by the expression *at the hour of cowdust.*

How graphic is the difference! Yonder, beyond the grass, the cow-girl leads her cattle home to the village for the night. Their feet as they go strike the dust from the sun-baked path into a cloud behind them. The herd-girl herself looms large across the pasture—all things grow quickly dim, as if the air were filled with rising dust.

The word *cowdust,* indeed, strikes a whole vein of expression peculiar to this Eastern land. Everything about the cow has been observed and loved and named. As much

water as will lie in the hole once made by its hoof is a wellknown measure amongst the Aryan folk!

It is unnecessary to argue further that while the facts of nature determine the main developments of speech, yet every language and group of languages differs from every other as the characters of individuals and of nations.

Something of the same sort is true of religious symbols. Short of perfect realization, we must see the Eternal Light through a mask imposed by our own thought. To no two of us, probably, is the mask quite in the same place, and some reach, by their own growth, diverging points so distant from the common centre that they mark the extreme limits hitherto achieved of those great areas known as the Christian, or the Buddhist, or the this-that-or-the-other consciousness.

To do this, or even to carry a whole race to a new rallying-place round a standard planted on the old frontier is the peculiar mission of religious genius.

So Jesus swept down in His might on the old Jewish entrenchments of justice—righteousness—and carried the banner off bodily to that outpost of love and mercy which struggling souls had reached, indeed, before Him, but which none had yet been strong enough to make the very heart and focus of vitality.

And so every one of us, simply by thinking his own thought, and living his own life to the full, may be answering his brother's cry for God in ways beyond the dreaming of the world. Are Catholic possibilities not richer for the life of Manning, or Protestant for Frances Ridley Havergal?

These things being true, the imagery of all men has its significance for us. The mask is created by our own thought directly, and indirectly through the reaction of custom upon thought. Like all veils, it brings at once vision and the limiting of vision. Only by realizing the full sense of every symbol can we know the whole thought of Humanity about God.

But down with all masks!

The Uncreated Flame itself we long for, without symbol or veil or barrier. If we cannot see God and live,—let us then die—what is there to fear? Consume us in primal fire, dissolve us into living ocean, but interpose nothing, no, nor the shadow of anything, between the soul and the divine draught for which it thirsts!

True. Yet for each of us there is a chosen way. We ourselves may still be seeking it, where and when still hidden from our eyes. But deep in our hearts is rooted the assurance that the moment will yet come, the secret signal be exchanged, the mystic name will fall upon our ears, and somewhere, somewhen, somehow, our feet shall pass within the gates of Peace, we shall enter on the road that ends only with the Beatific Vision.

Till then, well says the old Hindu poet of the folk-song to himself:—

> "Tulsi, coming into this world,
> Seek thou to live with all—
> For who knows where or in what guise,
> The Lord Himself may come to thee?"

Our daily life creates our symbol of God.

To the Arab of the desert, with his patriarchal customs, the father of the family,—just and calm in his judgments, protector of his kindred, loving to those who played about his knees as babes,—may well stand as the type of all in which men feel security.

Naturally, then, it was the Semitic mind that flashed across the dim communing of the soul with the Eternal, the rapturous illumination of the great word "Father."

God our father,—bound even to the most erring of His children by a kinship that misdoing cannot break (for if the human tie be indissoluble, shall the divine be less so?); father,—by a tie so intimate that to this day the stalwart Afghan, prostrating in the mosque, says "Thee"

and "Thou" to the God of Hosts, as might an infant on its father's knee!

In the Aryan home, woman stands supreme. As wife in the West—lady and queen of her husband—as mother in the East,—a goddess throned in her son's worship,—she is the bringer of sanctity and peace.

Profound depths stir within us, in presence of the intensely Christian conception of God—a child in His mother's arms. This ideal of the heart of a woman—pierced by its seven sorrows, on fire with love, mother beside the cradle, worshipper beneath the cross, and glorified in great humility,—has been one of the richest gifts of the Catholic Church to humanity.

Peerless in its own way is the womanhood of Rossetti's sonnet:—

> "This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect
> God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
> Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee . . . .
> Unto God's will she brought devout respect,—
> Profound simplicity of intellect,
> And supreme patience . . . . .
> Thus held she through her girlhood,
> As it were an angel-watered lily,
> That near God grows, and is quiet."

Jesus Himself—to those who kneel before no Madonna in the Vatican—sounds this note of the eternal feminine. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Is it not a woman's cry?

Nay, He is conscious of this element in His own nature. Once at least He speaks of it. In that sublime moment when He, the young Leader of the armies of future, stands on the sunlit mountains, and looking down upon the city of His race sees the dark shadow of destiny wrapping it about, in that moment when the Patriot forgets, in a sob of human anguish, that He is Master and Redeemer, in that moment He becomes all motherhood. "O Jeru-

salem! Jerusalem! Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee,—how often would I have gathered thy children together, like as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

The soul that worships becomes always a little child: the soul that becomes a child finds God oftenest as mother. In a meditation before the Blessed Sacrament, some pen has written the exquisite assurance: "My child, you need not know much in order to please Me. Only love Me dearly. Speak to me, as you would talk to your mother, if she had taken you in her arms."

But it is in India that this thought of the mother has been realised in its completeness. In that country where the image of Kali is one of the most popular symbols of deity, it is quite customary to speak of God, as "She," and the direct address then offered is simply "Mother."

But under what strange guise! In the West, art and poetry have been exhausted to associate all that is tender and precious with this thought of woman-worship. The mother plays with the little One, or caresses or nurses Him. Sometimes she even makes her arm a throne, whereon He sits to bless the world.

In the East, the accepted symbol is of a woman nude, with flowing hair, so dark a blue that she seems in colour to be black, four-handed—two hands in the act of blessing, and two holding a knife and bleeding head respectively,—garlanded with skulls, and dancing, with protruding tongue, on the prostrate figure of a man all white with ashes.

A terrible, an extraordinary figure! Those who call it horrible may well be forgiven. They pass only through the outer court of the temple. They are not arrived where the Mother's voice can reach them. This, in its own way is well.

Yet, this image, so fearful to the Western mind, is perhaps dearer than any other to the heart of India. It is not, indeed, the only form in which the Divine Energy

presents Herself to Her worshippers. To the Sikh, She is absorbed, embodied in his sword; all women, especially as children, are Her incarnations; glorious Sita carries the great reality to many.

But Kali comes closer to us than these. Others we admire; others we love; to Her we belong. Whether we know it or not, we are Her children, playing round Her knees. Life is but a game of hide-and-seek with Her, and if, in its course, we chance to touch Her feet, who can measure the shock of the divine energy that enters into us? Who can utter the rapture of our cry of "Mother"?

THE VISION OF SHIVA

Dark Mother! Always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for Thee a chant of fullest welcome?

Walt Whitman

It may have been that the forefathers saw it in the mountains. Or it may have been elsewhere. Somewhere it came to the Hindu mind that the beauty of snowpeaks and moonlight, and standing water, was different from all other loveliness of colour and profusion and many-channelled scene.

It was as though Nature, the great Mother, were clothed in raiment of green, broidered with birds and flowers and fruits, and veiled in blue, adorned with many jewels, and yet as if, amidst all the restless pomp and clamour of her glory, would shine through now and then, a hint of something different. Something white and austere and pure ; something compelling quiet ; something silent and passionless, and eternally alone. Even the beauty of the world, then, suggested a twofold essence. Wherever the Hindu looked, he found this duality repeated,—light and shadow, attraction and repulsion, microcosm and macrocosm, cause and effect. Nay, he looked into human life itself, and he found humanity as man and woman, soul and body.

Here was a clue. On the plane of symbolism, the soul of things somehow became associated with the manly form, and the manifested energy (Nature, as we call it) with that of woman and motherhood. In this conception will be noted the deliberate statement that God and Nature are necessary to each other as the complementary manifestations of One, just as we find in the male and female together, Humanity. That is to say, Nature itself is God, as truly as Nature's soul. "Are God and Nature then at

strife?" cries, not only a great poet, but the whole heart of our Western religion today. And far back from out of the dim centuries comes the hushed whisper of the Indian sages—"Look closer, brother! they are not even two, but one!" Under this aspect, the One Existence is known as Purush and Prakriti, Soul and Energy.

The highest representation of the Divine is always human. The shadow of a great rock in a weary land is a beautiful presentment of some imaginary qualities of God, but not for one moment does it delude the mind into the belief that here at last it has the thing itself. So with the Light and the Door, the Mountain and the Shield. These were not images that could take captive both brain and heart, firing a man to die in their defence. Very different was it with those other pictures, the Good Shepherd, the Eternal Father!

Here a strange mental confusion is imminent. The mystery behind all form is at last named in a formula so convincing, so appealing, so satisfying, that distinction ceases; we forget that even this is not final, that beyond the expression, and apart from it, lies the whole immensity.

Hinduism has avoided this danger of fixedness in a very curious way. Of all the peoples of the earth, it might be claimed that Hindus are apparently the most, and at heart the least, idolatrous. For the application of their symbols is many-centred, like the fire in opals.

This Purush and Prakriti utters a great principle. The relation of God to Nature is one demonstration of it. The soul and experience offer us another. The dynamo and the force that charges it would be a third.

This last illustration deserves a moment's attention. Everywhere we see the phenomenon of one waiting to be touched by another, in order to manifest power and activity. The two are known in India as Shiva and Shakti. As the knight waits for the sight of his own lady, powerless without the inspiration of her touch, as the disciple waits for the master, and finds in him at last the meaning of all his life

before, so the soul lies inert, passive, unstirred by the external, till the great moment comes, and it looks up at the shock of some divine catastrophe, to know in a flash that the whole of the without,—the whole of life, and time, and nature, and experience—like the within, is also God.

It is the beatific vision, says the West: it is realisation of the Self, here and now, declares the East.

Of such a moment is the Kali image symbol—the soul opening its eyes upon the world and seeing God.

We have seen that anthropomorphic representation of the Divine is absolutely necessary to human nature. But to learn the manner and method of that expression, we must know the whole heart and feeling of a people. To us, ideal manhood includes the king, the master, and the father. He must be supreme. He goes forth before His armies as general and sovereign. He counts the very hairs of His children's heads. He avenges their wrongs, and He protects from pestilence. He owns the vineyard of the world, and Himself prunes and cares for the chosen vine. Perfect in love, perfect in administration, perfect in power: ideal householder, ideal judge, ideal ruler. Such is the anthropomorphism of the West.

How strangely different is that of India! There, life has one test, one standard, and one alone. Does a man know God or not? That is all. No question of fruits, no question of activity, no question of happiness. Only—has the soul set out on the quest of realisation?

How literally this is the one passion we may see in popular drama. There, the romantic motive is of no account. That Jack should have his Joan (or not have her) is a mere incident, passed over with no superfluous words, at the beginning of things. But we sit for hours absorbed, enthralled, to know—when shall these men attain to God? Or even, when shall they discover that nothing but God is worth the having?

And of this stage of development, renunciation is accepted as the outward sign. For in that moment when

the red rose of the love of God springs and blossoms in a man's heart,—so that he cries out: "Like as the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, *so* longeth my soul after Thee O God!"—in that moment, as Asia knows well, everything else falls away from him. All the manifold satisfactions of the flesh become a burden. Home and kindred and intercourse with the world are a bondage. Food and sleep and the necessities of the physical life seem indifferent or intolerable. And so it comes that the Great God of the Hindu imagination is a beggar. Covered with the ashes of His sacrificial fire, so that He is white like snow, His hair growing untended in huge masses, oblivious of cold or heat, silent, remote from men, He sits absorbed in eternal meditation.

Those human eyes of His are half closed. Though worlds are uttered and destroyed with every breath, it is nothing to Him. All comes and goes before Him like a dream. Such is the meaning of the curious unrealism of the image. But one faculty is all activity. Within it has been indrawn all the force of all the senses. Upright in the middle of the forehead looks forth the third eye, the eye of inner vision. It is natural then, that Shiva the Great God, set forth as ideal manhood, should be known amongst other names as the Wondrous-Eyed.

He is the Refuge of Animals. About His neck have wound the serpents, whom none else would receive.

Never did he turn any way. The mad and the eccentric, the crazed, and the queer, and the half-witted amongst men—for all these there is room with Shiva. His love will embrace even the demoniac.

He accepts that which all else reject. All the pain and evil of the Universe He took as His share, to save the world, when He drank the poison of things, and made His throat blue for ever.

He possesses so little! Only the old bull on which he rides, and the tiger-skin of meditation, and a string or two of praying beads—no more.

And, last of all, He is so easily pleased! Could any trait be so exquisite as this? Only pure water and a few grains of rice, and a green leaf or two may be offered to Him daily, for the Great God in matters of this world is very very simple, and sets no store by things for which we struggle and lie and slay our fellow-men. Such is the picture that springs to the Indian mind, as representing the Soul of the Universe—Shiva, the All-Merciful, the Destroyer of Ignorance, the Great God. Such is the form in which are uttered finally those first faint suggestions of the light of Himalayan snow peaks and the new moon shining on still waters. Perfect renunciation, perfect withdrawnness, perfect absorption in eternity,—these things alone are worthy to be told concerning Him Who is "the Sweetest of the Sweet, the most Terrible of the Terrible, the Lord of Heroes, and the Wondrous-Eyed."

Listen to the prayer that rises to Him daily from many a worshipper, through the length and breadth of India:—

> "From the Unreal lead us to the Real,
> From Darkness lead us unto Light,
> From Death lead us to Immortality.
> Reach us through and through ourself,
> And evermore protect us,—
> O Thou Terrible!—from ignorance,
> By Thy sweet compassionate face."

Such is Shiva—ideal of Manhood, embodiment of Godhead.

As the Purush, or Soul, He is Consort and Spouse of Maya, Nature, the fleeting diversity of sense. It is in this relation that we find Him beneath the feet of Kali. His recumbent posture signifies inertness, the Soul untouched and indifferent to the external. Kali has been executing a wild dance of carnage. On all sides She has left evidences of Her reign of terror. The garland of skulls is round her neck; still in Her hands She holds the bloody weapon and a freshly-severed head. Suddenly She has stepped un-

wittingly on the body of Her Husband. Her foot is on His breast. He has looked up, awakened by that touch, and They are gazing into each other's eyes. Her right hands are raised in involuntary blessing, and Her tongue makes an exaggerated gesture of shyness and surprise, once common to Indian women of the villages.

And He, what does He see? To Him, She is all beauty—this woman nude and terrible and black who tells the name of God on the skulls of the dead, who creates the bloodshed on which demons fatten, who slays rejoicing and repents not, and blesses Him only that lies crushed beneath Her feet.

Her mass of black hair flows behind Her like the wind, or like time, "the drift and passage of things." But to the great third eye even time is one, and that one, God. She is blue almost to blackness, like a mighty shadow, and bare like the dread realities of life and death. But for Him there is no shadow. Deep into the heart of that Most Terrible, He looks unshrinking, and in the ecstasy of recognition He calls Her *Mother*. So shall ever be the union of the soul with God.

Do we understand what the background is from which such a thought as this could spring? For the Kali-image is not so much a picture of the deity, as the utterance of the secret of our own lives.

The soul in realisation beholds the mother—how? The picture of green lawns and smiling skies, and flowers steeped in sunshine, cannot deceive the All-Knower. Under the apparent loveliness, He sees life preying on life, the rivers breaking down the mountains, the comet poised in mid-space to strike. Around him rises up the wail of all the creatures, the moan of pain, and the sob of greed, and the pitiful cry of little things in fear. Irresponsible, without mercy, seems the spirit of time—deaf to the woes of man, or answering them only with a peal of laughter.

Such is the world as the Hindu mind is predisposed

to see it. "Verily," says the heart wearily, "Death is greater than Life, yea and better!"

Not so the supreme soul in its hour of vision! No coward's sigh of exhaustion, no selfish prayer for mercy, no idle resignation there! Bend low, and you shall hear the answer that India makes to the Eternal Motherhood, through all her ages of torture and despair. Listen well, for the voice is low that speaks, and the crash of ruin mighty:—

"Though Thou slay me, *yet* will I trust in Thee!" After all, has anyone of us found God in any other form than in this—the Vision of Shiva? Have not the great intuitions of our life all come to us in moments when the cup was bitterest? Has it not always been with sobs of desolation that we have seen the Absolute triumphant in Love?

Behold, we also, O Mother, are Thy children! Though Thou Slay us, yet will we trust in Thee!

The hour is gone, and the vision is passed away, the vision of the greatest symbol, perhaps, that man has ever imagined for himself. The hour is past, and we are back amongst the mountains in the early ages.

There is a gathering of the tribes for a Vedic sacrifice. Yonder, the bull majestically paces towards us, laden with wood for the sacrificial fire.

Now it is lighted, and from the central mass rises the blue-throated flame, while round the edge, leaving the fuel black and charred, curl those greedy red tongues of fire, to each of which the wise men give its separate name—the Black, the Terrible, and so on. The priests chant texts, and the people wait upon the worship. And we see faces-in-the-fire of the time to be when the eyes of the poet shall rest upon the sacrifice, and shall fashion therefrom this mighty vision of God and nature, the soul and life.

For scholars say that Shiva is but the fire of Vedic

rites personified. He is the wood borne upon the bull, and the flame which is white, with a patch of blue colour at the throat.

As for Kali, She, it is claimed, was one of His powers, one of the red licking flames, which char and blacken the wood that is not consumed. In token of which we see to this day Her protruding tongue.

Greatness is but another word for interpretation. We feel the very presence of some persons as if it were the translation of poems from a foreign tongue. Every profound truth waits for the life that shall be all its voice, and when that is found it comes within the reach of multitudes to whom it would have remained inaccessible.

But we cannot find truth in a word, unless it is illumined by our own experience. That statement which we have lived but have not spoken, even to ourselves, when uttered by another's lips, we hail as revelation. And that alone. What we have ourselves once said seems commonplace, and that which is too far above we do not understand.

So it happens that the interpreter, the poet, must be for ever telling to the world those things of which it has already won heart-knowledge. This is the sign that we demand always from the messenger—that he speak of a common memory. And to him who does this we listen gladly, believing that life will yet bring the significance of those words of his that do not, for the nonce, explain themselves to us.

Highest of all the poets stands the saint. His task is not to take the brilliant patches of love, and sorrow and heroism, and fit them into jewelled settings for the admiration of the many. He takes the whole of life, all the grey, sombre stuff of which it is chiefly made, and the blackest and the brightest with this, and throws on the whole a new light, till even in the eyes of those who suffer it, life is made beautiful. The dramatist deals only with dramatic motives, but to him all is dramatic. The petty needs of childhood are no less related to the World-Heart than the passion by which Othello slays Desdemona.

But that new tune to which he sets the old song of living has to be caught in snatches from the people, a note

here and a cadence there. The mother crooning her babe to rest, or wailing beside it in its last long sleep; the man panting for his adversary, or finding himself inadequate to the protection of those he loves; the peasant guiding the plough with patient strength, the child-folk playing in the sunlight, all these have whispered him in the ear, and taught him the whole of their mystic lore.

It is not then the voice of the prophet, but the great heart of the vulgar, that brings a new religious intuition to the birth. All that violence and gesticulation that repel us, are but the dim experimental utterance of an impulse not yet fully conscious of itself.

It is when the idea has been elaborated in this way by the imagination and conscience of the myriads, that there arises a man who seems to embody it in his own person. And he is hailed as Master and Teacher by all, because he interprets their own lives, and speaks the words that already they were struggling to express. He is the crest of the wave, but all these are the wave itself.

Born thus of his nation's life, and speaking straight to its heart was Ram Prasad, the great Bengali poet of the Motherhood of God. Not a century has passed since a crowd stood with him by the Ganges-side, listening to his recital of his own finest work. As he pronounced the last words the old man exclaimed, "It is achieved," and on the moment died. It was not death. It was translation. And the people feel that it happened yesterday.

He had begun life as a book-keeper, and no doubt tried, when he remembered them, to perform his duties faithfully. But when at the end of a week his employer called for his books, he found on the first page a sonnet beginning—"Mother! make me thine accountant. I shall never prove defaulter," and verses scribbled all over the accounts. One cry, "Mother! Mother!" rang through every line, and as the Hindu does not live who cannot understand a religious freak, his genius was recognised at once. A small pension was settled on him, and he was

set free from wage earning for the rest of his life.

The result is a collection of folksongs, full of the sentiment of Kali-worship, left to the memories of his people. Many it is to be feared, remain about the villages of Bengal, unrecorded to this day. But they are so integral a part of the life that there is good reason to trust that they will never be lost.

In after days, Ram Prasad became famous. Drifting down the Ganges one summer day, his little boat encountered the royal barge of Siraj-ud-dowla, the brilliant young governor of Bengal, and he was ordered to come on board and sing. The poet tuned his vina, and racked his brain for songs in the grand old classic style, fine enough to suit the presence. But the Mohammedan would have none of them—"Sing me your own songs—About the Mother!" he commanded graciously, and his subject was only too glad to obey.

No flattery could touch a nature so unapproachable in its simplicity. For in these writings we have perhaps alone in literature, the spectacle of a great poet, whose genius is spent in realising the emotions of a child. William Blake, in our own poetry, strikes the note that is nearest his, and Blake is by no means his peer.

Robert Burns in his splendid indifference to rank, and Whitman in his glorification of common things, have points of kinship with him. But to such a radiant white heat of child-likeness, it would be impossible to find a perfect counterpart. His years do nothing to spoil this quality. They only serve to give him self-confidence and poise. Like a child he is now grave, now gay, sometimes petulant, sometimes despairing. But in the child all this is purposeless: in Ram Prasad there is a deep intensity of purpose. Every sentence he has uttered is designed to sing the glory of his Mother.

For all his simplicity, however, our author is not to be understood without an effort. Nor need this surprise us. It takes the whole history of Rome and Florence to

make the Divina Commedia comprehensible. In fact we can never understand any poet without some knowledge of the culture that produced him, and what is true of Dante may be expected to prove still more applicable to one who is removed from us by oceans and continents, as well as by the complex civilising centuries.

Indeed it may be questioned whether the apparent artlessness of Oriental expression is not always somewhat misleading. Into four lines of landscape, we are told, the Chino-Japanese can slip the whole theory of his national existence, without ever a European suspecting double purpose; and much the same is the case with the Hindu. A wealth of such associations goes for instance to the appreciation of the great line describing the mountain-forests against the snow,—"They make eternal Sati on the body of Mahadev."

What is said of the Japanese artist is pre-eminently true of Ram Prasad, only it is in the broken toys and April shower and sunshine of a child's moods that he hides the mysteries of the universe.

Apart from his passion of devotion to the Divine Motherhood, there is a whole conception of life in his mind which is unfamiliar to us. The East takes such an utterance as "the pure in heart shall *see* God" very literally. It places the ideal existence, not in salvation—or in the condition of being delivered from sinfulness—but in this very power of direct perception of the Divine.

It seems to the Asiatic mind that the body is an actual hindrance to cognition. It is not that meaning is conveyed by language, but that mind is drawn near to mind. In unskilled speech, words may serve only to conceal thought, but in the most skilled they cannot do more than suggest it. Nerves do not create suffering, for the joy and sorrow that we share in imagination can be far keener than our own. And so this convention, of sight—sound—touch—taste—smell, under which we become aware of the not-myself, is merely a formula which deadens the Real for us

till we are strong enough to bear it; and we must stay in the body, or return to it, till we have in some way mastered these conditions.

When limitation is broken, however, when every dim stratum and substratum of our being has become conscious, and the whole consciousness is gathered up into the single tremendous act of knowledge,—not the conventionalised, formulated awareness of the senses, but direct absolute knowledge,—what is it claimed that we perceive? That which came before as many, as seeing and hearing and the rest, is known now to be One, and that One—God.

And so it happens that the great goal of Eastern religion is known as Mukti or Nirvana, or Freedom. The man in whom this perception is perfected is liberated from conditions—he may subject himself to them at will, but he is not bound by them. He has left the sleep of ignorance behind him, and is for ever awake. Says Ram Prasad:—

"From the land where there is no night
Has come One unto me.
And night and day are now nothing to me,
Ritual-worship has become for ever barren.

My sleep is broken. Shall I sleep any more?
Call it what you will—I am awake—
Hush! I have given back sleep unto Him
whose it was.
Sleep have I put to sleep for ever.

The music has entered the instrument,
And of that mode I have learnt a song.
Ah! that music is playing ever before me,
For concentration is the great teacher thereof.
Prasad speaks—Understand, O Soul, these
words of Wisdom."

But the great burden of his verses is the Mother. And in calling upon Her he becomes the ideal child. It is curious to reflect how a century and a half ago, almost a hundred years before the birth of childhood into European

art, a great Indian singer and saint should have been deep in observation of the little ones—studying them, and sharing every feeling, almost without knowing it himself.

Once, indeed, he seems to justify himself—

"Whom else should I cry to, Mother?
The baby cries for its mother alone—
And I am not the son of such
That I should call any woman my mother!
Tho' the mother beat him,
The child cries, 'Mother, O Mother!'
And clings still tighter to her garment.

True I cannot see Thee,
Yet am I not a lost child!
I still cry 'Mother, Mother!'"

But indignant pride gives way to secret despair, mingled with an angry impatience. God must be dead—no living mother could so long resist a baby's cries. He will hold a funeral in effigy, and retire from the world for ever.

"Mind, stop calling 'Mother, Mother!'
Don't you know She is dead?—
Else why should She not come?

I am going to the banks of the Ganges,
To burn the grass image of my Mother,
And then I'll go and live in Benares."

When the question of his going on pilgrimage, however, is seriously mooted, he makes a reply of wonderful beauty and profundity. Naughty as he is he does not want to go, and is willing to support himself with reasons. Doubt leads to doubt and a frown culminates in a supreme defiance:—

"Why should I go to Benares?
My Mother's lotus-feet
Are millions and millions
Of holy places.

The books say, man dying in Benares
Attains Nirvana.
I believe it. Shiva has said it.
But the root of all is devotion
And freedom is her slave.
What good is there even in Nirvana?
Mixing water with water——!
See I do not care to *become* sugar,
I want to *eat* sugar!"

What a flash is in those last two lines! The shrewd mother-wit of a peasant joins with the insight of a great poet, not only to express the finest of fine emotions—the joy of being the inferior, but to hint in the same words, at the secret of existence.

Quaint beyond quaintness is the song of the kite-flying. To the child mind it is quite natural that its mother should play with its toys. All mothers do so. And now Kali becomes the playmate. Her toy is the Indian kite, of which the string is covered with powdered glass that it may cut through others. But the boy forgets his game, so completely is it She that fascinates him. He breaks away and looks on with grave joy at Her, while his lips involuntarily frame a song. It is the game of life, that is played before him; the kite released is the soul, gone to freedom; and still the Mother laughs and plays on, as if She knew not that all these were shadows:—

"In the market place of this world,
The mother sits flying Her kite.
In a hundred thousand,
She cuts the string of one or two.
And when the kite soars up into the Infinite
Oh how She laughs and claps her hands!"

Again he is making a mystery out of nothing, playing hide and seek, as babies love to do.

"The name of Her whom I call my Mother, shall I tell that secret to the world?" he says (lit. "Shall I break the pot before the market?") "Even then who knows Her? Lo, the six philosophies were not able to find out Kali!"

That is almost the only simile in which he ceases to be a child, when he adjures himself to "Dive deep, O soul, taking the name of Kali!" into that ocean of beauty from which he is to bring up the lustrous pearl.

So much then for the art-form in which this worship of tender appeal has been enshrined. To the Hindu mind the poet's familiarity with his Mother makes him not only dear and great, but infinitely devout. It proves, as did the repartee of S. Theresa, that God is more real to him than the objects and persons that we see about us daily. Is it not true that a soul so close to the Divine might well have been that child who was taken on Christ's knee when He said:—"Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

It is not as the interpreter of man's love to God, but as the great Incarnation of the spirit of the Mother towards Her children, that we pass on and kneel at the feet of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

Here is one who has but lately gone out from amongst us. Less than twenty years ago he was teaching in the Temple-Garden of Dakshineshwar, near Calcutta. And so large loomed the Divine through him, that many of those who knew and loved him then, speak his name to this day with bated breath, calling him, "Our Lord."

For in the case of Ramakrishna, innumerable prayers and unheard-of austerities had culminated in a realisation so profound that there was scarcely a memory of selfhood left. The man who lived and moved before his disciples was a mere shell, that could not fail to act as the indwelling motherhood willed. He never used, it is said, the expression "I" and "mine," preferring "He who dwells here" (indicating His own heart), or usually "My holy Mother."

That his original physique must have been extraordinary, we can infer, since it stood the strain under which his religious yearning hurried it, for fifty years. But far more wonderful was the complexity and many-sidedness of character and of development, that made him feel the perplexities of every heart as if they were his own. His

was, probably, the only really universal mind of modern times. Yet the whole was wrought to such a unity that the peace of it fills to this day the little chamber where he dwelt, and abides like a mighty presence under the great tree of meditation. That little room, how poor, even to meanness, it looked when I last saw it!

It was night, and a tiny lamp—a cup of oil with a floating wick—illumined the exquisite purity of bed-linen and the fresh flowers placed by faithful hands before the Master's picture. The lamp was lifted, and the long shadows seemed to come down, from some dim upper abode, and prostrate themselves in worship. All was as he had used it, the lounge beside the bed, a huge water jar in one corner, a few religious pictures on the walls and nothing more. Outside the heavy rain of June fell steadily, and below the terrace the Ganges moaned and hastened on. I have seen it in other moods—seen it when the oleanders nodded and whispered to the roses on the terrace, when the great mango groves behind were full of blossoms, and the clang of the bells for evening worship broke the silence to make the place like a smile at time of prayer. And I have seen it in the terror of an Indian noon, full of coolness and flower fragrance. But never did it look so poor as that June night, and never was poverty made so beautiful.

Here great scholars and potentates have been proud to be received—"And they seemed," said one who was often present, "like children before our Lord!"

He, at least knew nothing of the difference made by wealth and learning in the world. He dismissed the most important man of his district with a frown from his presence because he stood upon his riches and his name; he would leave companies of distinguished persons to themselves; and he would spend hours listening to the confidences of an anxious woman about her home, or in the instruction of some nameless lad. Yet his touch fell on none lightly. A great preacher, known to the West as to

the East, changed his teaching when he knew him, in this new thought of the Motherhood of God. And many of the strongest men in India today, sat at his feet in their boyhood. An unlettered peasant, from the Brahmins of the villages, scarcely able to read and write he seemed, yet if original thought and wide reading are enough, he was a profound scholar. For he had a remarkable ear and memory that made him retain the sounds of the Sanskrit perfectly, with the translation, and as a vast quantity of literature was read and recited to him from time to time, he had acquired in this way an uncommonly large store.

In those years of which we are now speaking, the last twenty of his life, he was a great light, known as a saint throughout Bengal, the North-West Provinces and Nepal, and much visited, in the informal Eastern way. Men felt themselves in his presence to be dealing with forces that they could not gauge, drawing on wisdom which they were unable to fathom. As if he were great music, they touched there the state that mighty music hints at, and went away saner, sweeter, stronger to their daily tasks.

Yet all this time his real inner life was lived amongst that group of young men who had foresworn the common motives of existence, to call themselves his disciples. He was rarely without one or two in immediate attendance, and many were with him day and night for weeks and months together.

Some were mere boys, and it was fitting that laughter and frolic should make a large part of the life together. Their Master was never sad. A gentle gaiety seemed the very air he breathed, broken indeed by the constant trance of rapture, and by the wonderful inspiration of his mood afterwards. "When it is night to all beings, then is the man of self-control awake: when all beings are awake, then is the night of the man of knowledge," he would chant, waking them during the dark hours to come out and meditate in the star-light, while many a day was spent swinging on the elephant creeper that his own hands had

planted, amidst laughter and picnicking in the garden. The stream of days flowed on, without apparent plan or purpose,—yet all unnoticed a few leading ideas were being insisted on; a story here and there was building up the knowledge of that tremendous struggle through which he had attained to peace; they were watching him deal with men and things: above all, they were bathing in that Ocean of the Real to which his presence was a perpetual access.

And is not this the wisest of all teaching, to make sure of essentials, and leave the minds of the instructed to work out their own results, like the young plant growing up from seed? For we may be sure of one thing,—the order that is imposed upon us may become geometrical, but only the order that we create ourselves can become organic. It was the old Indian ideal of a university, to live in the forest with the Master and realise the meaning of culture in the touch of his personality.

These men to whom Ramakrishna Paramahamsa entrusted the mission and teaching of his "Divine Mother"—for he never dreamt of them as his own,—were chiefly graduates from the neighbouring colleges, many of them deeply tinged with the Western reaction which was the temper of that day. The distance between them and Christianity was shorter than would now seem possible. They were touched by its evidence of purity and enthusiasm for humanity, and full of a very genuine love for the New Testament. Occidental influences had stirred them to ideas of patriotism otherwise foreign to the Hindu temperament. They were looking for great things from the adoption of a more European taste and style of living. Above all, they had conceived the idea that India was being ruined by idolatry, and that the one thing incumbent on them was to do what in them lay, to sweep away every image and relic of degraded superstition, and to work for her emancipation from caste, from the zenana system, and from whatever else had till now been considered her distinctive institutions.

Speaking broadly, many of the finest minds of the Indian universities of that time felt thus, and these young disciples of Ramakrishna were among their following.

Suddenly they found themselves face to face with this ascetic saint of the old orthodox Hindu pattern. Gentle, without solemnity or affectation, full of humour, living in his garden almost nude, knowing little of the English save on hearsay, as a queer folk from overseas, the old man held them by a spell they could neither analyse nor break.

His perfect sincerity and gigantic purity made themselves felt even by youth, but against his intellect some made a desperate resistance. Long, long after, one of them said, "I was always looking for something that would prove him to be holy! It took me six years to understand that *he was not holy,* because he had become holiness itself!"

He was glad to hear all they could tell him of the Bible. Christianity was in the air in those days, and he had loved Christ and worshipped Him long before they came to him ; but he bated no jot of his own devotion to Kali. "As sugar," he said, "is made into various figures of birds and beasts, so one sweet Mother Divine is worshipped in various climes and ages under various names and forms. Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Supreme."

The ritual of Kali-worship is the only existing provision in India for animal sacrifice. This means something entirely different from the Jewish notion of propitiation. There is no idea whatever of making compensation for sin: the whole intention is to offer meat-food first to the Mother, for Her use and blessing. No meat is eaten by the the orthodox Hindu without being consecrated in this way, whether he be otherwise a Kali-worshipper or not. But the Anglicised portion of the community, while consuming vastly more animal food than their conservative brethren, take great exception to these preliminaries, and have perhaps concentrated on this particular creed in consequence, all the horror with which idolatry as a whole inspires them.

These were the associations of the disciples with Her whom their Master called his "Divine Mother."

But it was not Kali only; there was not a symbol in India that he had not worshipped and did not love; not a worshipper, by whatever rite, whose special need he had not felt in his own nature, and borne till it was satisfied; not a prayer, or ecstasy, or vision that he did not reverence and understand, giving it its true place in a growing knowledge.

His was in fact the most perfect religious culture that the mind can conceive. The doctrine that "different creeds are but different paths to reach God," propounded in a general way, was not new in India. But taught as this man taught it, with his strong contention that it was the actual duty of men to follow their own faith, for the world gained by many-centredness; with his intense conviction "in whatsoever name or form you desire to know God, in that very name and form you will see Him"; with his assurance that rites and ceremonies contain religious experience, as the husk contains the germ; and above all, with that love that said of every faith, "Bow down and adore where others kneel, for where so many have worshipped, the Lord will manifest Himself"—it was unique in the world's history.

To those who have learnt even a little of the authenticity of the religious consciousness, it is not difficult to see intellectually that creeds may bear to each other the relation of contemporary languages all expressive of that one consciousness. But Ramakrishna in the garden of the Kali-temple, was a direct embodiment of the impulse to speak to each in his own language and tell him how to reach the goal. In this man's love there was no limitation anywhere. Let one be sincere, and neither race, nor history, nor stage of development could cut him off. Each who came to him had his own place given to him, and kept it. His longing was for the salvation of every soul in a whole world. A universe from which one, most insignificant, was missing, could not have seemed perfect in his eyes.

Love such as this carries all hearts at last. Only such love deserves the name of God the Mother.

He was entirely abandoned to this great passion. There was nothing in him that remembered anything else. In the long years of self-discipline he had knelt to worship the very lowest, doing menial service for them with his own hands; in the last days of his life when he lay dying of cancer in the throat and speech was agony, he would insist on teaching all who came to him for help.

This was the secret that his disciples learnt by degrees. But on the outside, how free from display it was!

The old man sits chatting quietly with his boys. Now, with a twinkle of the eyes, he gives worldly advice to one—"Raise the hood (alluding to the cobra), but do not bite!" Again in a deeper moment, "There are thirty-six letters in the alphabet, and three of them say 'suffer'." (Bengali has three s's, which are so pronounced).

Everything taught its lesson, even the folklore of the district, and the quaint superstitions of the uneducated. In Ramakrishna's eyes, doubtless, much of human learning was on a level at bottom with the legend of the philosopher's stone; but let a man see to it that he touched the feet of God, and whatever was his would become pure gold. Little incidents that occurred would all become the text of some remark, often of great profundity. Even a half-cooked vegetable would furnish a metaphor, it was like the aspirant who, falling short of perfection, is not yet all humility and tenderness. The bell, whose distinct strokes could be heard from the neighbouring temple die away into a long common vibration would remind him that God is both with form and without form too, and He is that which transcends form and formlessness.

There was wit too. All the saintliness in the world would not prevent a laugh at the man who was so indifferent to worldly interests that he permitted his wife to limit his charities.

And then, even as he talked with them, something

would stir him deeper. A great light would come on his face, and he would pass, as they awed, sat and watched, into the state of divine ecstasy, the inner vision of the Mother.

So, day by day, unutterable love and burning renunciation were woven into the texture of their lives, till one exclaimed, "It was not what he taught us, but that life that we lived with him! And that can never be told!"

At last came a summer night towards the time of full moon, when his disciples gathered round him, perceiving him to be passing into that beatitude from which there would be no return.

Even at that moment he rose suddenly to answer a thought in the mind of one. And then he left them, while one, whose music he had loved, chanted over him the name of God.

Later, in the dark, came a woman, sitting at his feet crying softly, and calling him "Mother." It was that disciple who had been his wife.

During their afterlives, when the boys had become men, and had begun to carry the message of their great Teacher far and near, they found that nothing he had given them was more precious than the story of his own early struggle and attainment. With the outer circumstances of his boyhood they were familiar, having mixed freely with his relatives and village neighbours, whenever these chose to visit Dakshineshwar.

India is probably the one country in the world where a man can be awake to the meaning of his life from his infancy without having a whole growth of superstitions become heart of his heart at the same time. No doubt superstition is there, but it is possible for it to drop away imperceptibly as, to use Ramakrishna's own expression, the dried petals drop from the ripening fruit.

In this sense he seems to have been awake from the beginning. He had inherited the long-garnered knowledge of his race, that religion is no matter of belief but of

experience. The worship of the Great God of Getting-on disgusted him; and he longed to attain the sweetness of Divine Union even in boyhood. With all this he kept caste strictly, and without thought of personal comfort.

At twenty years of age, however, all these elements became absorbed in one supreme desire. Pressure of many circumstances had assigned to him the duty of acting as assistant priest in the Kali-temple at Dakshineshwar. We must think how it would work on a strongly religious temperament to find itself set apart for the service of God. We must remember also that the utterances of Rama Prasad and many another devotee of Kali were part of the common language of the country. It was as if his chosen way were pointed out to him. It was only for him now to traverse it.

His duty was to swing lights and flowers before the image, in the beautiful Arati ceremony.

But his whole nature had gone down in passionate yearning for the Mother Herself. One question, "Is this real? Is this real?" rang eternally in his ears. And he could not perform even this simple task efficiently. Sometimes he would swing the lights all day, sometimes he would forget them altogether, lost in a maze of agonised supplication.

The tale went about that he was mad, and as, everywhere, people will try by a dose of this world to drive out the other, his relations decided that the distraction of a wedding would give him his only chance of a cure. It was in this way that he was married to a little girl who long afterwards came to him and became one of the greatest of his disciples.

But a wedding-feast proved no mitigation of a struggle so tremendous, so overwhelmingly actual, and he had to be released from his stint of work. No doubt he would have been dismissed also from the garden but that the owners of the temple had recognised his genius and protected him.

The associations of this new period cluster thick round a great banyan-tree, and a wooden hut that once stood near it. The tree stands in the wilder part of the garden, close to the river, in perfect seclusion. Five stems grow together, and round the entwined trunk is built a terraced seat of brickwork. At the north-western corner a great bough of the Bo species has grown down across the bench, and tradition says that this covers the exact spot in which realisation was achieved. Be this as it may, the place was the scene of continuous meditation and austerity for many years. Not that the asceticism seems to have been premeditated. It would appear rather to have been the inevitable result of something deeper. Ramakrishna did not forbid himself to sleep or eat, he was unable to do either. He did not force himself to neglect his person, he entirely forgot it.

Driven on by his own nature, impelled from within by that irresistible necessity that had called him into being, without one rest or relaxation, for twelve long years at least, he persisted in that inner warfare. Then, at last, the goal was attained. The Mother revealed Herself. From that moment his personality was that of a little child, satisfied that he was in Her arms.

* * *

He had discovered a great secret, when he would break a disposition, he would reduce it to a concrete instance, and battle with it there. It was so that he had night after night performed that act of cleansing that was to rid him of social pride.

Now as he came slowly back to life out of the rapture of Eternal Union, having perceived the whole of Nature as himself, he yet, with his quickened senses, saw many elements in human life for which he had not actually traced the path. And so, one by one, he took these as questions on the simplest plane. Beginning with that worship of Krishna which is related to his own as the Catholic Church to the Protestant, he made himself in all ways one with it.

He ate and dressed and talked like the lovers of Hari,—and he ended by identifying devotion to Krishna with the love of Kali. So it was with Mohammedanism, and so with Christianity. It was not he who did these things. It was that Great Love that he felt within and called his Mother. He was not humble, but he seemed to have forgotten that Ramakrishna had ever been.

Then came the strangest phase of all. He would realise God as a woman! It was the flowering point of a certain tender chivalry that had always marked him, and makes his life the true emancipation of Indian women. His method, here and always, was the same,—to forget his own past and cause it to be forgotten. So he made every detail of their lives his own, and went to visit his wife in her village home, that he might find his friends entirely amongst her acquaintances and share every joy and sorrow of their hearts. Till at last he satisfied himself that the secret victory could also be attained in the straight path of womanhood.

And herein surely lies the gist of his life. As a mother's love justifies the existence of *all* her children, however unsympathetically they be judged by others, so he, the embodiment of the World-Mother, would take up whole areas of living and assert the place of each in the complete harmony of life.

And is it not a great doctrine,—that every man's cottage-door stands open on some high-road to the Infinite? Is it not immeasurably consoling, this cry of "No more idolatry! No more condemnation!" but to every man where he stands, using the means that lies to his hand—"Fix thine heart upon the Lord thy God, and let thine eyes look right on!"

It was as a seal upon this teaching that whoever came to Ramakrishna afterwards went away with profound courage. For the Master put his finger always upon the core of strength, and even his limitations became as wings upon the feet to the man so touched.

So with social customs and public movements, he destroyed no institutions: he did everything to make men and women strong in them. His friendship was given unhesitatingly to the leaders of reforming sects, and as readily to the despised artists of the theatre, while at the same time he was worshipped by the orthodox.

And yet he appeared quite unconscious of what he did. He seemed to act on divine instinct, like a child, and like a child, to be always superbly right. He was content to live, and leave to others to explain. Long ago, in early manhood, it had been no desire to become a teacher, but the longing to find the Real, that had driven him forth on the supreme quest. Now, it was because he would satisfy his unspeakable yearning over men and women that he tried every path to find God. Had one been left untrodden, his own soul would have gone seeking still. He never became the director of any, for in afterlife, it is said, he could not even imagine himself a teacher. He scattered his knowledge broadcast, and each took what he would.

We learn in him that greatness, and harmony, and beauty are all results. Our concern is not with them, but with those more elemental matters of simplicity and sincerity and whole-hearted devotion that lie close to us.

He is a witness to the world that the old Indian wisdom was not in vain. It is of course true that in no other country could he have occurred. But it is not true that he expresses the mind of India alone, or even chiefly. For in him meet the feeling and thought of all mankind, and he, Ramakrishna, the devotee of Kali, represents *Humanity*.

THE VOICE OF THE MOTHER

Arise, My child, and go forth a man! Bear manfully what is thy lot to bear; that which comes to thy hand to be done, do with full strength and fear not. Forget not that I, the giver of manhood, the giver of womanhood, the holder of victory, am thy Mother.

Think not life is serious! What is destiny but thy Mother's play? Come, be My playfellow awhile,—meet all happenings merrily.

Murmurest thou of need of purpose? Think'st thou the ball is purposeless, with which the Mother plays? Know'st thou not that Her toy is a thunderbolt, charged with power to shatter the worlds, at the turn of Her wrist? Ask not of plans. Needs the arrow any plan when it is loosed from the bow? Such art thou. When the life is lived, the plan will stand revealed. Till then, O child of time, know nothing!

My sport is unerring. For that alone set forth on the day's journey. Think it was for *My* pleasure thou camest forth into the world, and for that again, when night falls, and My desire is accomplished, I shall withdraw thee to My rest. Ask nothing. Seek nothing. Plan nothing. Let My will flow through thee, as the ocean through an empty shell.

But this thing understand. Not one movement shall be in vain. Not one effort shall fail at last. The dream shall be less, not greater, than the deed. Thou shalt go here or there for some petty reason, and thy going shall subserve great ends. Thou shalt meet and speak with many, but some few shall be Mine from the beginning. With these thou shall exchange a secret sign, and they shall follow with thee.

And that sign?

Deep in the heart of hearts of Mine own flashes the sacrificial knife of Kali. Worshippers of the Mother are they from their birth in Her incarnation of the sword. Lovers of death are they,—not lovers of life—and of storm and stress.

Such shall come to thee with torch unlit for fire. My voice cries out over the teeming earth for lives, for the lives and blood of the crowned kings of men. Remember that I Who cry have shown also the way to answer. For of every kind has the mother been the first, for protection of her flock, to leap to death.

Religion, called by whatever name, has been ever the love of death. But today the flame of renunciation shall be lighted in My lands and consume men with a passion beyond control of thought. Then shall My people thirst for self-sacrifice as others for enjoyment. Then shall labour and suffering and service be counted sweet instead of bitter. For this age is great in time, and I, even I, Kali, am the Mother of the nations.

Shrink not from defeat, embrace despair. Pain is not different from pleasure, if I will both. Rejoice therefore, when thou comest to the place of tears, and see Me smile. At such spots do I keep My tryst with men, and fold them deep into My heart.

Uproot every interest that would conflict with Mine. Neither love, nor friendship, nor comfort, nor home, may make its voice heard when I speak. Pass from a palace to plunge into the ocean of terror,—from the chamber of ease to stand guard in a burning city. Know that as the one is unreal, so also is the other. Meet fate with a smile.

Look for no mercy for thyself, and I shall make thee bearer of great vessels of mercy to others. Accept bravely thine own darkness and thy lamp shall cheer many. Fulfil gladly the meanest service, and leave high places unsought.

Be steadfast in the toil I set thee. Weave well the warp into the woof. Shrink from no demand that the task

makes on thee. Feel no responsibility. Ask for no reward.

Strong, fearless, resolute,—when the sun sets, and the game is done, thou shalt know well, little one, that I, Kali, the giver of manhood, the giver of womanhood, and the withholder of victory, am thy Mother.

A VISIT TO DAKSHINESHWAR

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee."—*Isaiah.*

He was not in the vastness. And the Soul, lying on a housetop on the Earth, and looking forth into the uttermost of space, realised the solitude and trembled.

Then came one whose voice spake within the heart, saying very gently, "Come thou away into that quiet place and rest awhile. There it may be that thou shalt speak with Him." And that soul arose, following after, as it were, the Angel of the Presence,—who bore white lilies, and about his feet played flames, and his eyes to look into were like mighty waters—and came by many ways unto the Lord's own garden, and rested there.

And there was in that garden a place where five trees grew together, beneath which oftentimes had the Master sat and prayed and entered into glory. Thither went the soul, laden with sorrowful queries and needs, and being received into the silence, waited.

On the left flowed the river, and the great barges went past swiftly, with sails full set. Beneath, the dead leaves stirred in the breeze, or rustled under the footsteps of a mouse. And on the branches above fell the flood of moonlight, dropping through and making spaces on the brickwork, all outlined by quivering leaves and moving stems.

The whispers of river and trees and lone night-creatures were the only sounds that could be heard. . . .

"Those with whom I was wont to come, O Master, are absent now. In far distant and separate lands think they upon this place. I would make memorial for them at Thy feet tonight!"

And the Lord said—"It is well. My own are ever Mine. I bear their burdens; I guide their footsteps; and

at last I bring them to that haven where they would be. there are three here tonight, My child, not one. Be assured."

"Some whom we love, O Lord, are in fetters of suffering. With hearts cramped by fear they look out upon their world. One longs for death because life is bitter: to others, life comes so hard that we almost ask for death for them. We pray Thee, give these ease, or that light that makes ease of no account."

And the Lord, smiling, listened—"It cannot be, O Lord, that for the People we can do nothing! In the midst of terrible calamity, shrinking from the gaze of death, or striving against the blow that will rob them of the beloved: sleeping hard in the air of poisonous swamps, ill-fed, ignorant, and oppressed, it cannot be that we, so much more fortunate, can share *nothing* with them. It cannot be that Thou wilt tell us it is vain to struggle."

"And what would you have?"

"Only the right to share their danger, if nothing can be done. Only to hold their heads and hearten them—to perform some menial service for them—not to feel utterly cut off from fellowship, while they tread the wine-press of despair!"

"Is this all?"

"Nay, if it were granted to us to serve truly—that would be blessedness. If we might indeed bring help, then the cup were full. But even without this we pray to be allowed the freedom where men do what they can, without thought of self. Command us not forever to think of the necessities of life. Grant us to give, and leave with Thee, and remember not whether life or death we shall take away."

And there was long silence. And at last the Voice, very gentle and reproachful—

"O foolish Children! Have ye yet to learn that this

love that speaks in your hearts is not yours but Mine? Must ye struggle and plead with me for My own? Know ye not that difficulties and discouragements but point out the way in which I would guide you? Strive on and fear not! That way shall be found! Can *My* love be baffled?... Is yours more than its feeblest utterance? Remember—'Thy right is only to action: thy right is never to the fruit thereof.' May be this struggle is itself your action. Yours not to ask how it shall end. ... Your love is not separate from Mine. Know that these two are one...."

And as the words died away, those souls rested for a moment in the sight of a Universe that was all Mother—of a love of which the love of human mothers for their children is but a feeble glimmer—of a life that whether hard or happy-seeming, was all alike the dealing of that Universe-Mother with Her babes.

* * *

And the Master put forth His hand in that place and blessed His worshippers.

AN INTERCESSION

"These are the days that must happen to you:
You shall not heap up what is called riches.
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve.
You but arrive at the city to which you are destined.
You hardly settle yourself to satisfaction, before you are called, by an irresistible call, to depart.
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who remain behind you.
What beckonings of love you receive you shall answer with passionate kisses of parting.
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reached hands towards you."

Walt Whitman

Mother! Far away, one whom I love is very sad today. His heart calls to mine for help, but though I tell him how I love him, I leave him still uncheered. How is it? I know he thinks towards me, I know I talk with him. Yet I long to see him, and hear him, and comfort him face to face!

My child, if this were not so, the sense-life would not be yours, or would not hold you. When you have reached that place where the communion of souls is enough, you will find that it is *more* than the knowledge of the senses, faith will already be swallowed up in sight.

But, oh Mother, what can I now do to ease this craving pain? I prayed for the vision of Raghunath* and did not know that it meant torture multiplied a thousandfold. When one is in trouble oneself, one's own little world lies in gloom ; outside, the busy feet pass up and down beneath the windows, the birds build nests, and the children play

* The vision of Raghunath is one of the eight perfections. It consists in feeling the sufferings of others as if they were our own. Many stories of the saints, especially those of the stigmata, give us special cases of it. It is told of a Hindu devotee, that when a bullock was smitten cruelly in his presence he screamed and fell down fainting; and when the passers-by ran to his assistance, he was found to bear the marks of the lashes on his own back.

in the sunshine, as before: but the universe becomes all black when the beloved suffers.

Cease, My child, from inordinate affection. Give Me your heart, and let Me govern it alone. Be the *witness* of earth's joys and sorrows, sharing them not. Thus only can you keep yourself from entanglement, and attain to peace.

But peace for myself, dear Mother, why should I seek? How can I turn a deaf ear to his voice that calls me, adding another pang to the heartache of a life, and go away myself, and be at peace? Give *him* that inner peace! Let me win it for him, if Thou wilt be kind! But I cannot will to fail him in his need and loneliness, even to gain Thy blessing!

* * *

Ah foolish one! Every thought of love that you send out to answer his, becomes a fetter of iron to hold him in life's anguish. Hide you yourself in My heart, My child, and he, too, will come home to Me. For your *love's* sake, let your voice cease to be one with the voices of the world. Let it come to him only in Mine, when that is borne on the south wind at the time of sunset, calling him gently to worship at My feet. Let it be one with transcendent love, with infinite freedom. Only thus can you satisfy him. Only by withdrawing yourself can you bring him peace.

* * *

Mother! I yield. Take me, I pray Thee, into Thine own heart. Let me not look back. If Thou wilt call me I shall find my way there, surely, though my eyes now are blind with tears.

And for those I love, shall I trust Thy mercy less than I trust mine own?

The allusion here is perhaps to one of the earlier steps in the acquirement of this perfection, when we have a deepened appreciation of the pain of those we love.

Yet if at the last they seem to stumble, if the foot slip, or Thy voice fail them by the way, promise, dear Mother, once more to wake me from the dream of bliss. Cast me out from Thy heart, I beg of Thee, and let those who so need Thee, go in before to peace!

Silly, silly child! Like a helpless bird you beat your wings of littleness against My grace! Look up and laugh! For already the cloud that seemed so black is passing. Already the clasp of hands about the heart is loosened. *Two* souls draw the breath of strength and relief. The feet of *two* who come to Me are shod with gladness. The hearts of two beat high, for the conquest born of renunciation.

THE STORY OF KALI

Baby darling, what is the very first thing you remember? Is it not lying on mother's lap, and looking up into her eyes, and laughing?

Did you ever play hide and seek with mother? Mother's eyes shut, and baby was not. She opened them, and there was baby! Then baby's eyes shut, and where was mother? But they opened again, and—oh!

When mother's eyes were shut, where was she? There all the time? But you could not see her eyes. Yet she was there.

Baby, some people think God is just like that. A great great Mother—so great that all this big world is Her baby. God is playing with Her world, and She shuts Her eyes. Then, all our lives long, baby darling, we try to catch the Great Mother peeping. And if any of us can do that, if any of us can look into the eyes of God, just once, just for a minute,—do you know what happens?... That person at once knows all secrets, and he becomes strong and wise and loving, and he never, never forgets that moment.

And when you win like that, when you catch the Mother looking, something else happens. Something lovely. All Her other children come and play with you. The little birds come, and the wee lambs love you, and the wild rabbits touch your feet, and the poor children in the streets, who are cold and hungry perhaps—poor children that the Great Mother loves most of all, because they seem to have no father or mother, and perhaps no home—poor children trust you, and make a place for you with them. We are all sitting on the Mother's lap, but these sit closest of all to Her breast.

Written for Baby Legget, at Bally, Calcutta, Christmas 1898.

And what do we call the Mother with Her eyes shut? We call her Kali.

Were you ever, for a very few minutes, unhappy? And did mother, or nurse, or auntie, or someone else, come and pick you up, and love you, and kiss you, till you were not unhappy any more?

Sometimes God is like that too. We get so frightened because those eyes will not open. We want to stop the game. We don't like it. We feel alone, and far away and lost. Then we cry out. It has grown quite dark, and still the Mother's eyes are shut. Let us play no longer. So we feel sometimes.

But the eyes are not shut, really. We think so, because it is dark all round. Just at that moment when you cried out, the beautiful eyes of the Mother opened and looked at Her child like two deep wells of love. And you, if you had seen, would have stopped playing all at once, and saying "Kali! Kali!" you would have hidden your little face on the Mother's shoulder, and listened to the beating of her heart instead!

And so, wee one, will you remember that the Great Mother Kali is everywhere? Even when She seems to be far away, it is only that you cannot see Her eyes. *This* mother goes away, and you cannot see her. But Kali is always there, always loving, and always ready to play with Her child.

And will you sometimes remember to stop playing, just for a minute, and to fold your little hands, and say, "Dear Mother Kali, let me see Your eyes!"

* * *

There is another game of hide-and-seek that the Great Mother plays. This is more like a fairy story. She hides sometimes in other people. She hides in anything. Any day you might see Her eyes, just looking into mother's, or playing with a kitten, or picking up a bird that had fallen

from its nest. Under all these forms you may find God playing at hide-and-seek!

When there is something to do for someone—Kali is calling us to play. We love that play. She Herself said once (She was hiding in someone, and He said it was Her). "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, My little ones, ye did it unto Me." Is not that like a fairy story! And what funny places She, the Great Mother, can hide in! Another time She said "Lift the stone, and thou shalt find Me. Cleave the wood, and there am I!" Did you ever lift a stone or break a piece of wood to see what was inside? Did you ever think *that* was God—at the heart of things? How beautifully Kali plays! You might find Her *any*where!

* * *

Does mother love baby when she is hiding from her? Why of course! else why should she hide? Even when her eyes are shut, is Mother loving baby? Why yes, see how she is laughing all the time!

And so with Kali. We need never be frightened, though Her eyes are long shut. She is laughing all the time. In Her own good time God will stop playing, and we shall look into Her eyes, and get away and away behind the world—straight "to the other end of nowhere," all at once.

So let us always run to play when we are called. Remember, little one, if any need anything you can give, your Mother is calling you to find Her! If anyone ask for something you can do, it is really Mother saying "Peep childie!" or when a new person comes for you to love, Kali is saying "Here am I!"

* * *

There is something else. You love mother and father and auntie and nurse, and—, and—. Of course you do. Besides, they love you, and they are all so good and kind.

But far far away, mother has a brother, a big brother,

like Holl. Do you love him too? Why? You never saw him. He never played with you.

No, but mother loves him. And you love all the people mother loves—don't you dearie? And so we love all the people Kali loves. *All* the children She plays with, and the lambs, and the flowers, and the great trees, and the little fishes. She loves all these, and She loves too the stars in the sky. And so do we. For we are Her children and everything that She loves we love too, because She is the Mother, and we cannot help it.